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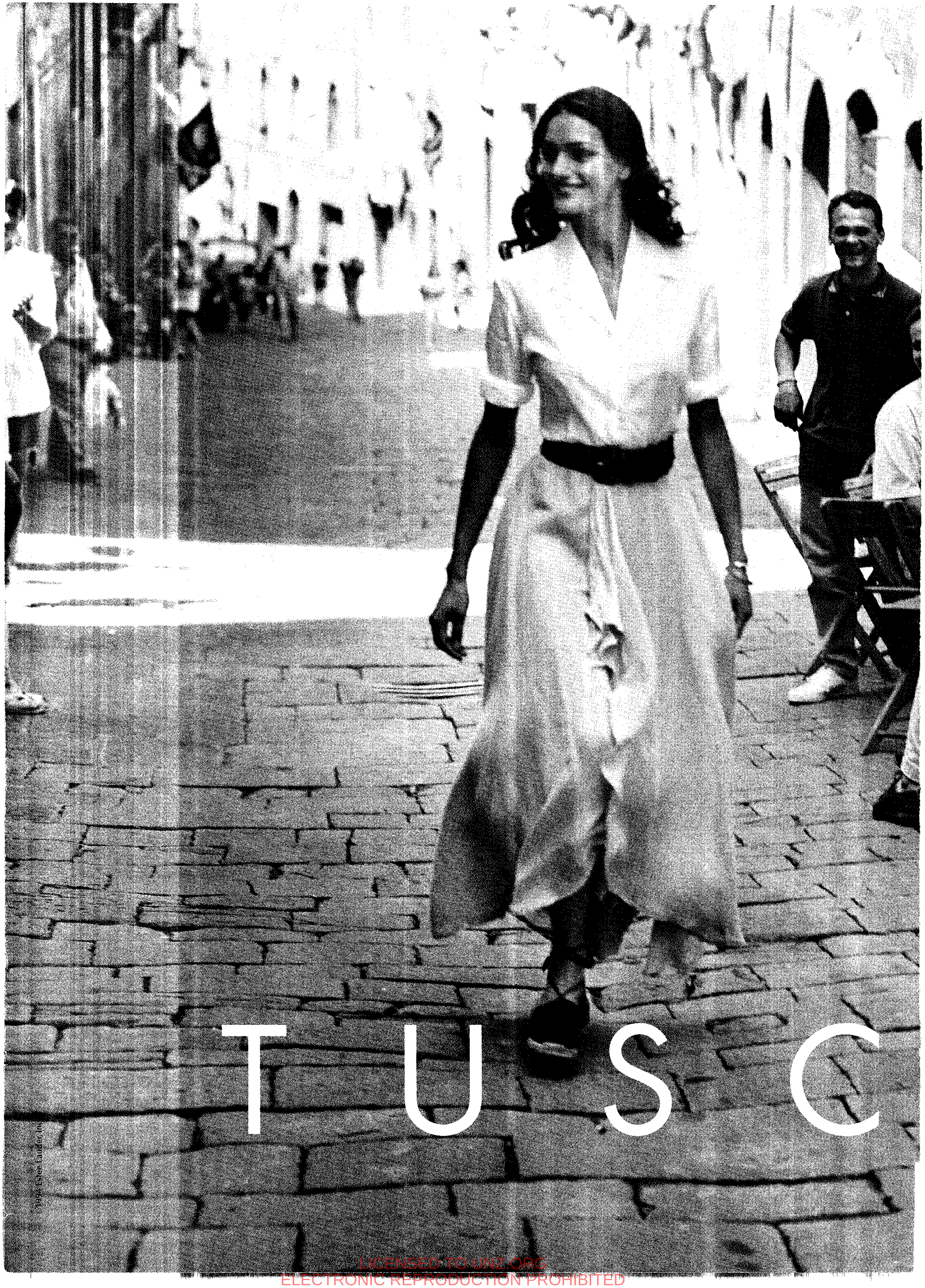

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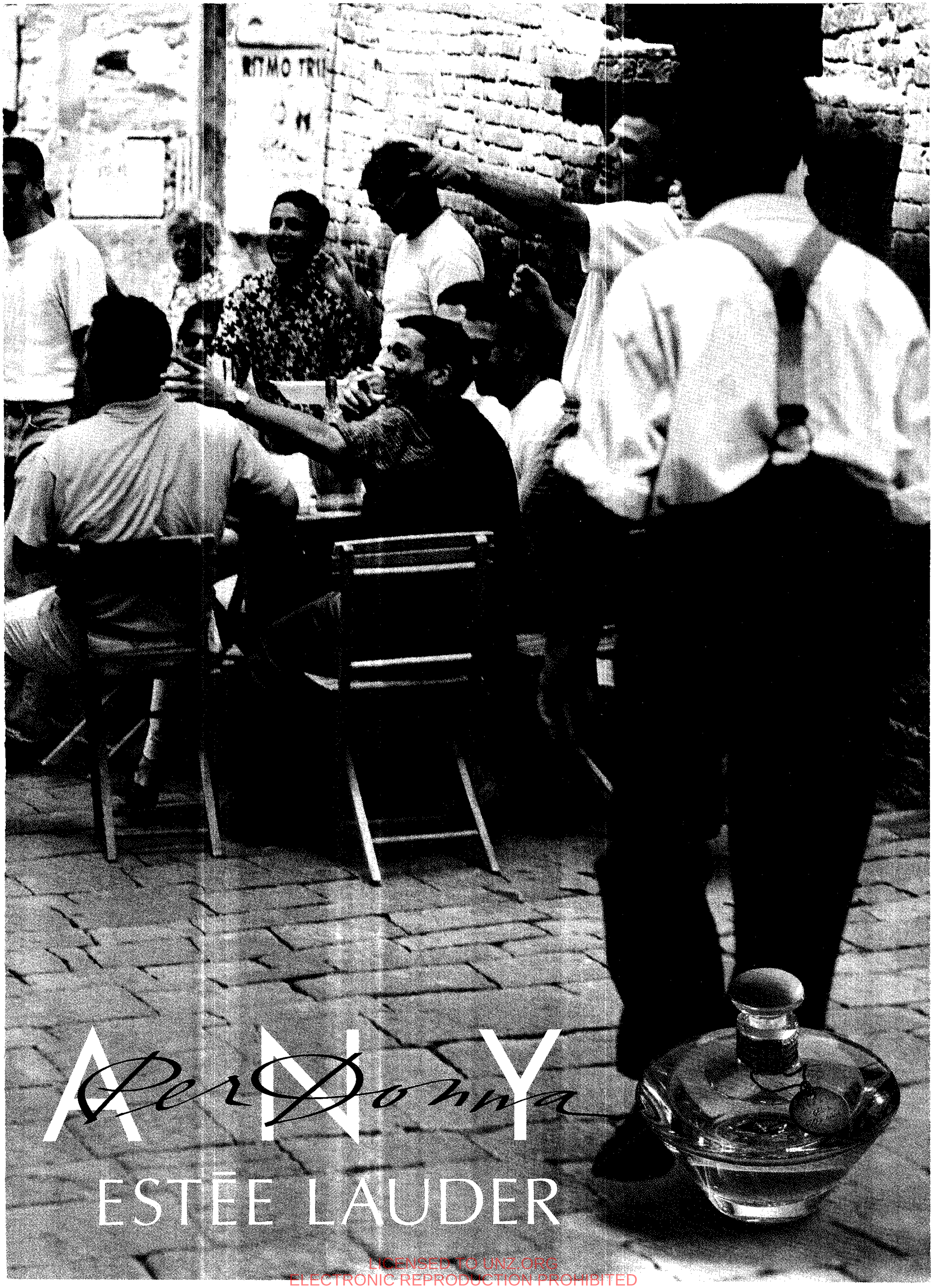
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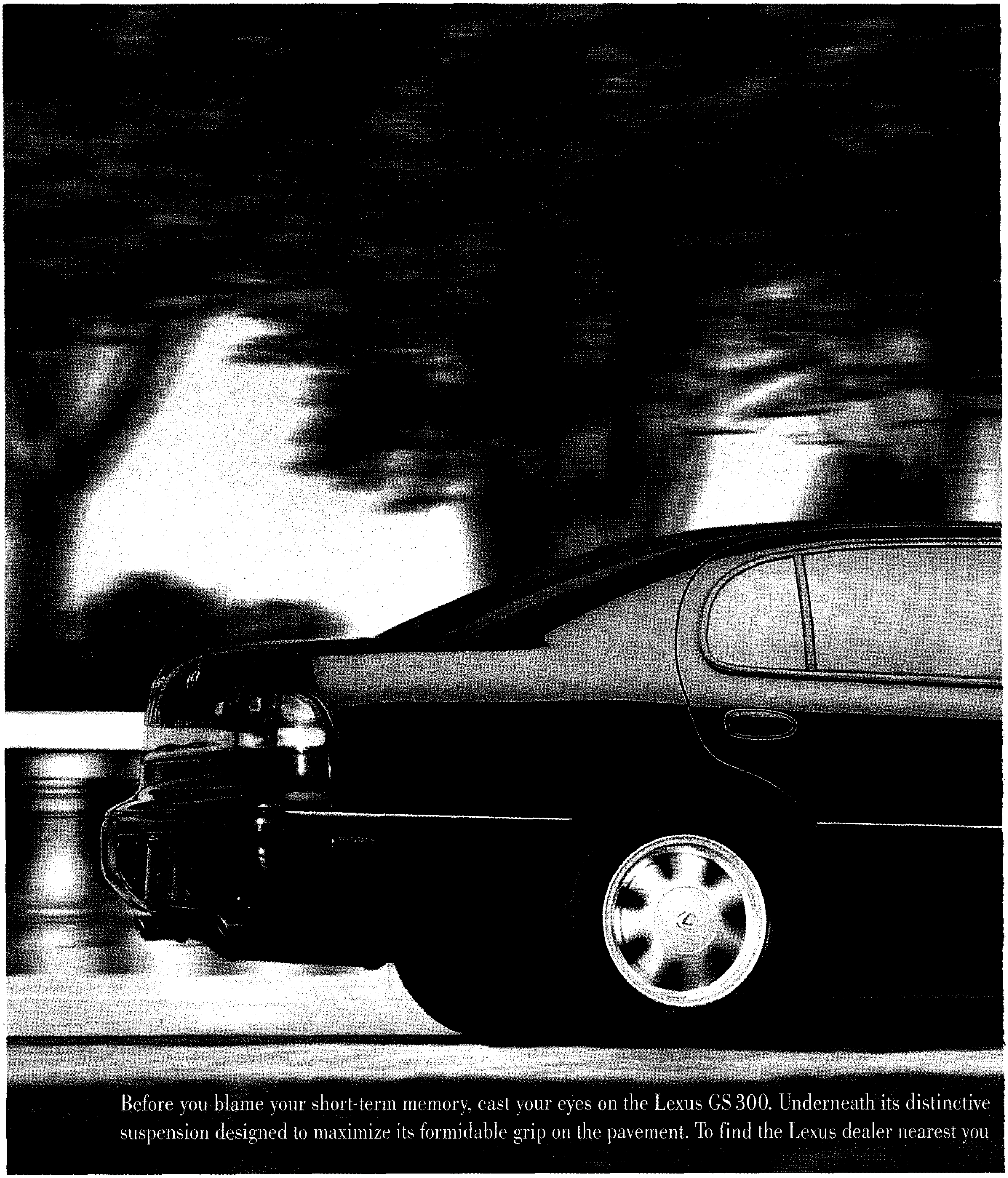

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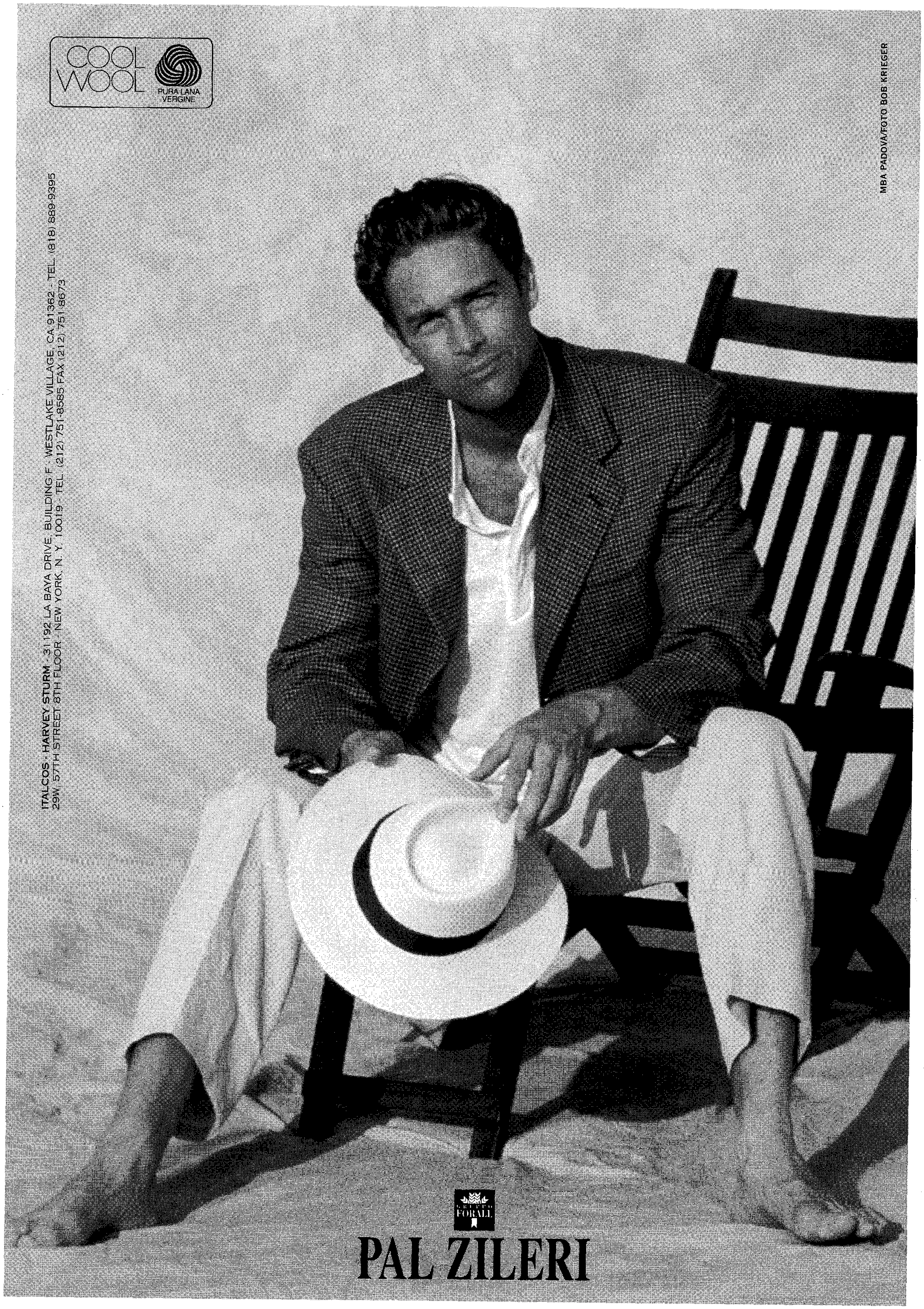

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THE 70TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE OF
THE NEW YORKER

FEBRUARY 20 & 27, 1995

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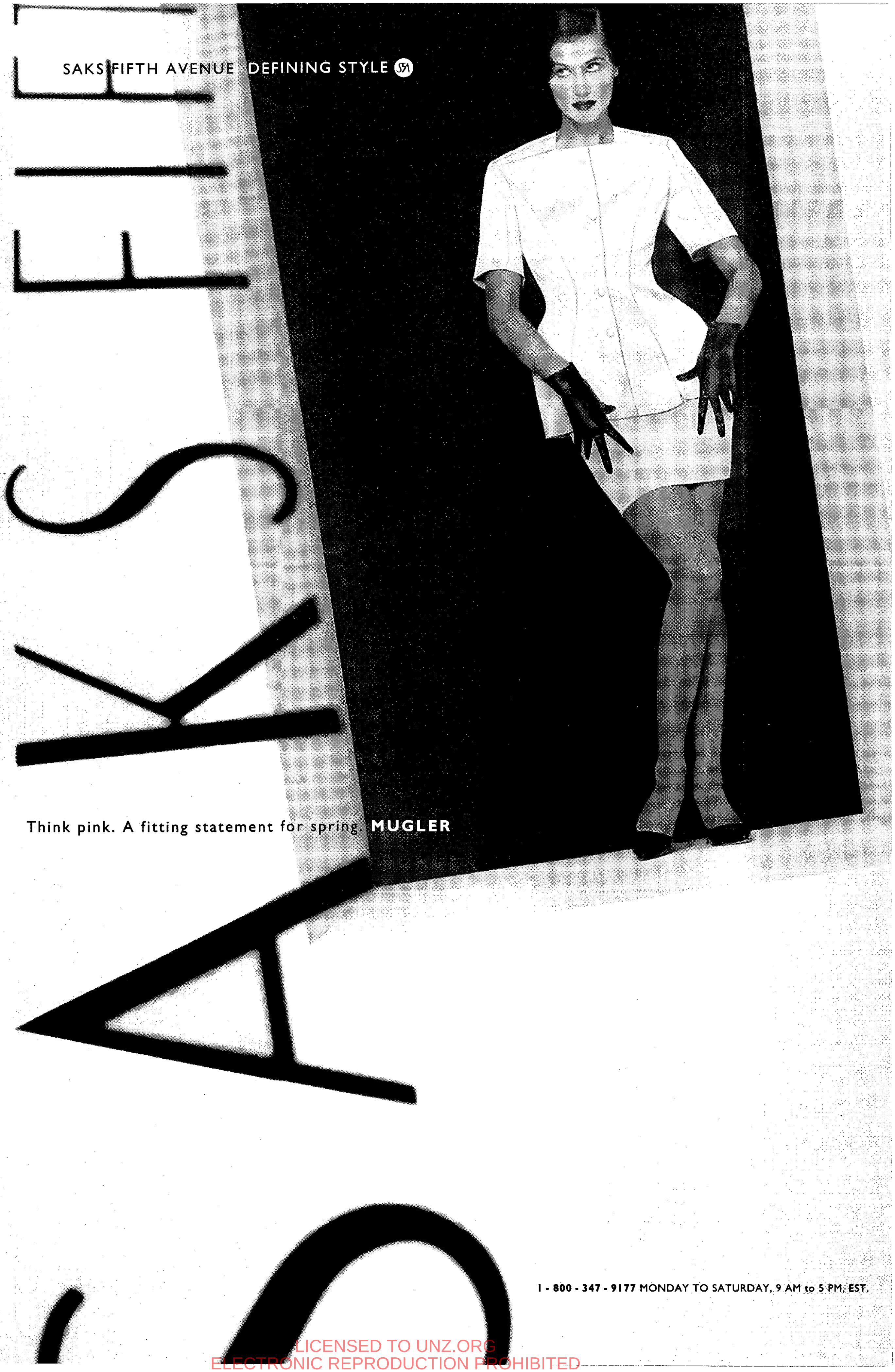

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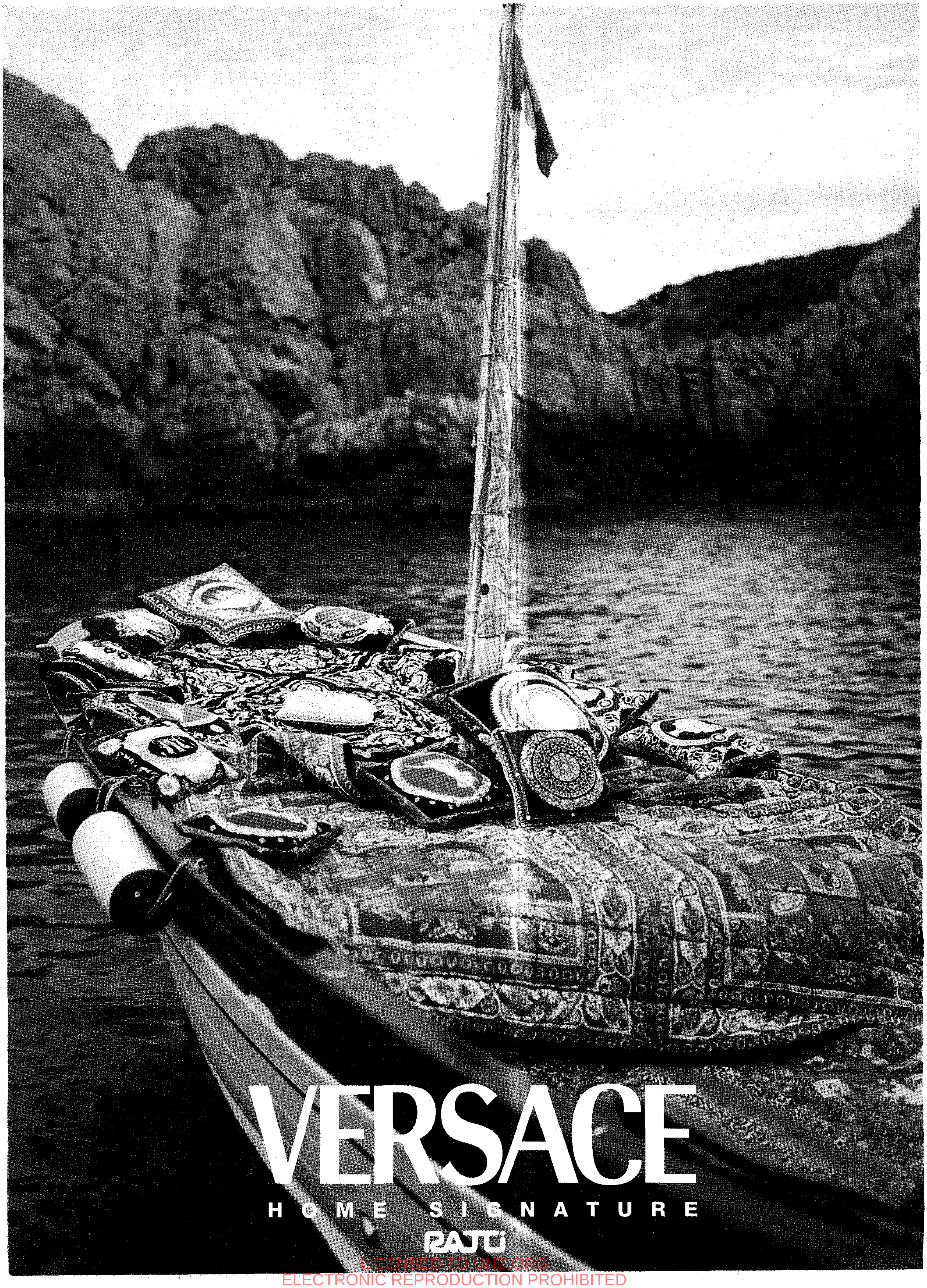
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COMMENT

MAKING CHANGES

It's the only way to stay the same.

IN the course of William Shawn's long career as editor of *The New Yorker* (1952-87), he would sometimes shake his head in dismay over what he took to be an astonishing misapprehension on the part of many readers—the misapprehension that one of the magazine's most admirable qualities was its contriving to remain always the same in a restlessly shifting world. Subscribers would write in to congratulate Shawn on preserving what he himself vehemently believed he had not preserved: an unalterable *New Yorker* identity. In his view, the magazine was constantly evolving, and any impression that it was engaged in merely reproducing itself from week to week was, so Shawn protested, an optical illusion—a product of the physical attributes (typography, layout, and the like) that had made the magazine a recognizable commodity on the newsstands and, given the financial success the magazine was enjoying, offered no obvious pretext for alteration from one issue to the next, or even from one decade to the next.

Shawn would point out a second, non-optical illusion that fostered the misapprehension he deplored: the human reluctance to acknowledge change. Superstitiously, people are apt to suspect that even a trifling innovation may prove to be bad magic. A staff member recalls that when he told Shawn of having read somewhere (wrongly, but never mind) that the Chinese character for "change" was the same as the one for "opportunity," Shawn replied, "With us the equivalent would be 'fear,' " and by "us" he appeared to mean not only the makers of the magazine but its readers as well. On the one hand, they were slow to accept novelties that were quite welcome to them: again and again, the magazine would be praised for publishing a "new" writer or cartoonist whose work had been appearing regularly in its pages for weeks or months. On the other hand, certain changes in makeup—for example, the decision to employ a real table of contents after getting along without one for forty-odd years—seemed more reckless to certain of the readers than to Shawn. And when the writer of "The Race Track" retired, and Shawn dropped the depart-

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ment, readers who had never been near a track in their lives wrote in to protest its absence; it wasn't information about horses that they mourned the loss of but a long-established relationship.

Shawn constantly took chances, but his way of doing so was reliably gentle and circumspect. Harold Ross, the founding editor, had been a melodramatist, reacting to any changes imposed on him by crises in the outside world—the Depression, the Second World War—with an air of panic that was a feature of his self-created theatre of the absurd. Shawn, both as Ross's trusted deputy and as his illustrious successor, would respond to a crisis, global or local, by saying softly, "We must stand back from it." If he was upset, he would lower his voice, not raise it; the most violent imprecation he was known to utter was a whispered "Oh, God." And if changes in the contents of the magazine which were introduced by Shawn (and likewise by his successor, Robert Gottlieb) were major, they were often the product of a stealth that made them *seem* minor. Shawn enjoyed stealth and had early mastered the art of listening to other people's troubles and keeping them secret.

Under Shawn, the magazine broadened its range, lifted its gaze, deepened its insights: any metaphor will do as long as it doesn't call undue attention to itself, the process having been by calculation obscure. Certain big pieces—John Hersey's "Hiroshima," Rachel Carson's "Silent Spring," and James Baldwin's "The Fire Next Time" are prominent examples—caused immense commotion, not only because what they said was startling but also because the fact that they appeared in *The New Yorker* took the world at large by surprise. Readers had no reason to express surprise, but many did. Long before *The New Yorker* became a passionate voice of opposition to the Vietnam War and the political depredations of the Watergate era, Shawn's high moral purpose had infused the magazine on every level, in small pieces as well as large, sometimes causing it to teeter perilously close to earnestness. But then earnestness is a risk implicit in the very words "high moral purpose," and here one was grateful that moderation was native to Shawn. He would say to a taxi-driver travelling at a higher speed than he could bear, "I'll tip you just twice as much if you'll drive me just half as fast," and he followed the same principle in the continual transformations of the magazine.

In recent times, the transformations have become more visible—have had about them, indeed, an air of exuberance, which looks back to and resembles the attitude that the pioneering Ross assumed, claiming to be hard-pressed but plainly in tearing high spirits. The magazine has grown older, as all things must, but it seeks to remain invincibly young in its response to life and, like Lewis Carroll's Father William, is willing to stand on its head, and even to carry off from time to time, perhaps to the alarm of some readers, an unexpected somersault. That is how things are on West Forty-third Street. It happens that on this midwinter day the sun is shining with a Mediterranean brilliance—New York City is, after all, on roughly the same latitude as Rome, Athens, and Istanbul—and the sky beyond our office windows is of an intense, unclouded blue. We have reason to treat the fine weather as a well-timed gift, for it is our birthday. Seventy years! But it may be that seventy candles are too many for no matter how big a cake; if so, the traditional "one to grow on" will suffice.

—BRENDAN GILL

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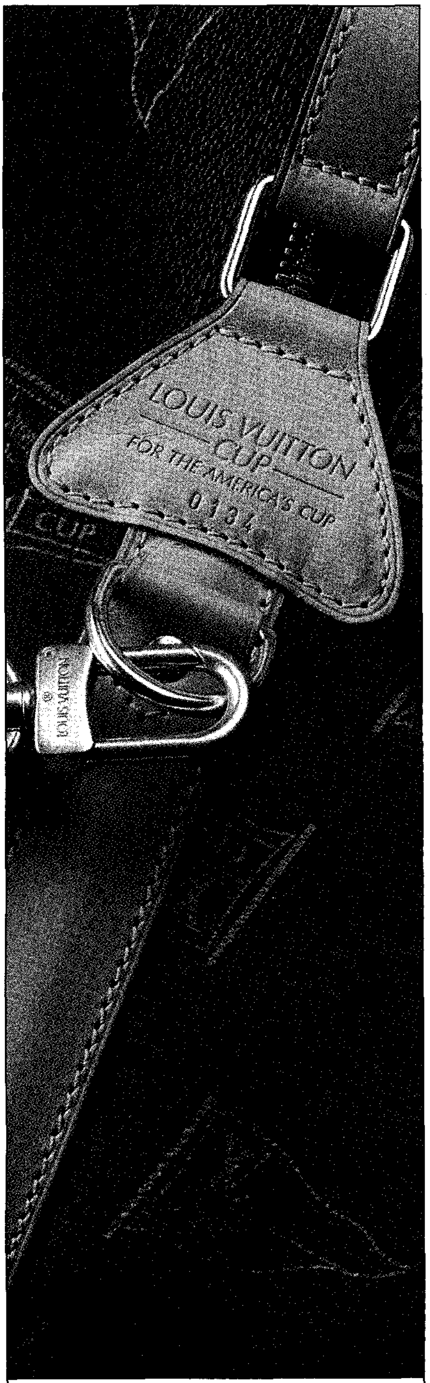

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IN THE MAIL

BETTER LATE THAN NEVER

From February 21, 1925, until October 4, 1993, The New Yorker didn't regularly publish letters to the editor. In this issue, we start to catch up on the backlog.

April 15, 1934

As a faithful reader of *The New Yorker* I feel entitled to protest against a series of so-called drawings which appear with the irritating regularity of swamp fever, namely [James Thurber's] "The War Between Men and Women."

Aside from the fact that I do not get the point, if any, I consider the alleged drawings hideous, unfunny, no better than the waste paper of a three-year-old let loose with a pencil. These hen-tracks are a weekly blemish in an otherwise exceptionally attractive magazine. If they continue to appear I shall go out and play with rabid dogs.

EVA PITTARO
New York City

The cover of the issue of March 19, 1938, showed a black man passed out on the steps of a brownstone with a liquor bottle nearby; Edna Ferber, who had written an article for one of this magazine's earliest issues, wrote to Harold Ross.

March 19, 1938

I think you know that I don't write this sort of letter, except under strong inner compulsion. I've waited two days to write it. But I can't believe that you, who have taste, humor, and courage, actually gave your consent to the use of the cover on this week's *New Yorker.*

It is brutal, vulgar, and hideously unjust. God knows we have enough of those three commodities without any addition to the already overflowing measure. I honestly think that you owe a written apology to the Negroes and to your subscribers.

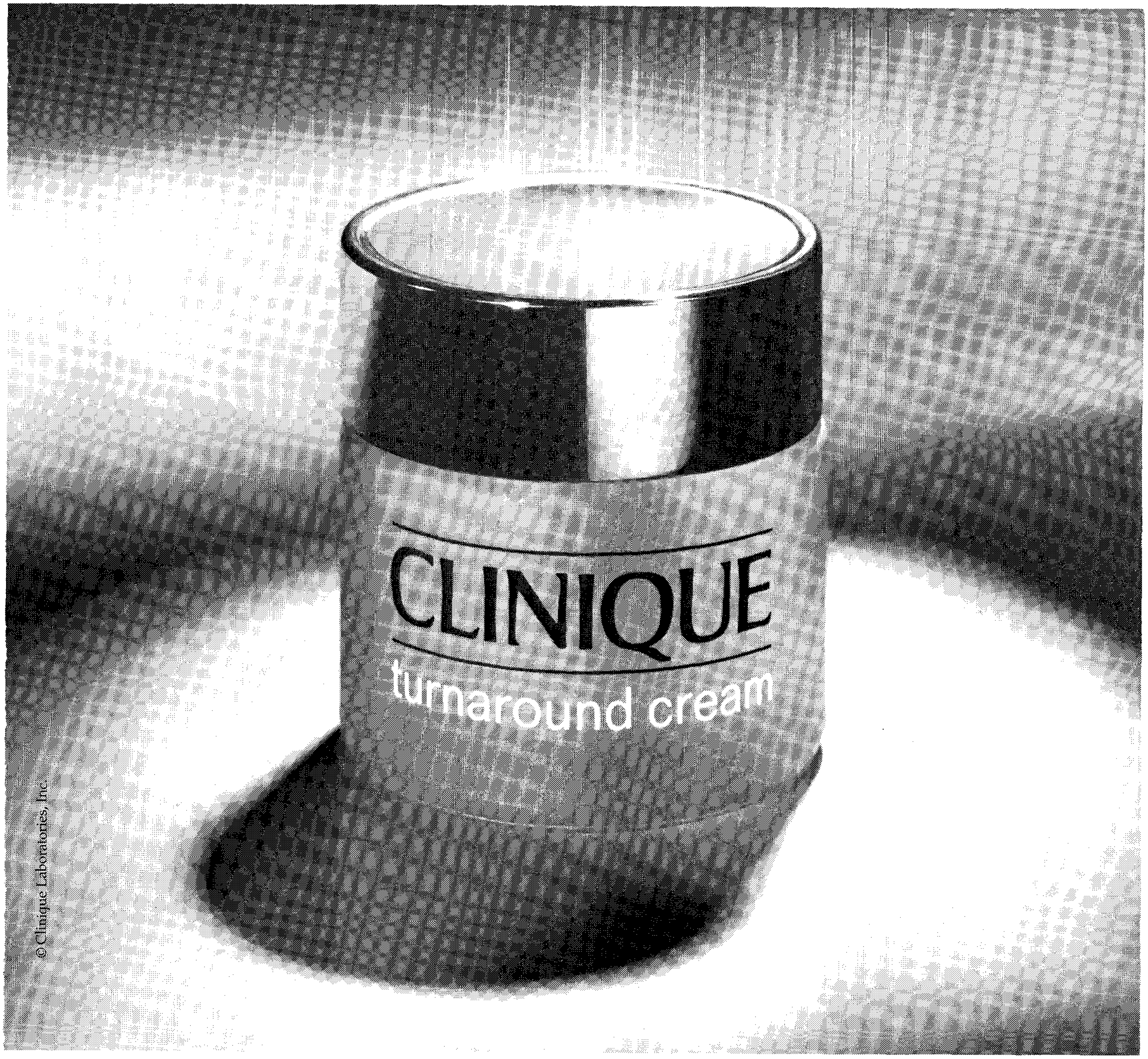
EDNA FERBER
New York City

Philip Hamburger wrote "Television" from October, 1949, through January, 1955.

March 19, 1950

My affectionate regard for your magazine has led me to expect that you would not out of thoughtlessness or hasty judgment hurt the feelings of anyone. I was therefore saddened, on reading "Television" in your issue of March 18th, to see the cavalier treatment meted out to that fine and profoundly ethical character Kukla (of "Kukla, Fran, and Ollie"). Twice—and with no apparent justification—Mr. Hamburger referred to Kukla as a "pinhead," and also, to make matters worse, as "that pinhead." My dear sirs, I could not be more shocked if someone had called Mr. Tilley a "pinhead." I only hoped that Kukla (obviously a type who reads *The New Yorker*) would by some happy chance miss seeing that issue.

Unfortunately, it did not work out that way. On Friday, March 17th, I was an eyewitness to the sorry consequences of your article. I myself saw Kukla, Fran, and Ollie react with proper joy and pride to the news that they had "made" *The New Yorker*. Then my heart sank as I watched Kukla riffle excitedly through the pages to find the place. I knew exactly what would happen. The three associates read happily down the column—beaming over the phrase "high-level stuff." And then, inevitably, they came to the tragic word. And a terrible silence fell. Neither Fran nor Ollie nor I could bear to look at Kukla's face. His spirit was quite shattered. Everybody tried to change the subject, of course. But to no avail. At intervals throughout the half hour, Kukla murmured—not in anger but in infinite sorrow—"What did they



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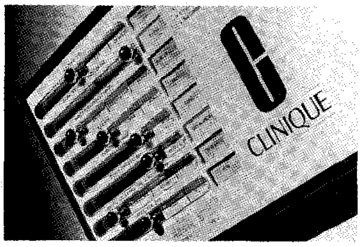

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mean I'm a pinhead?" And when Ollie tried to comfort him by intimating that it was a term of endearment, Kukla cried.

Gentlemen, if you had been there you would have felt *awful.*

I am sure that Mr. Hamburger meant no harm. Had he known what a thoroughly nice and sensitive character Kukla is, I'm sure he would have bitten off his typewriter before making such a faux pas. My suggestion is that Mr. Hamburger get to know Kukla better—and then make what amends he thinks proper.

NINA BOURNE
New York City

In June of 1962, the magazine published a three-part article by Rachel Carson, "Silent Spring," on the dangers of pesticides, especially DDT.

June 29, 1962

Miss Rachel Carson's reference to the selfishness of insecticide manufacturers probably reflects her Communist sympathies, like a lot of our writers these days.

We can live without birds and animals, but, as the current market slump shows, we cannot live without business.

As for insects, isn't it just like a woman to be scared to death of a few little bugs! As long as we have the H-bomb everything will be O.K.

H. DAVIDSON
San Francisco, Calif.

The cover of the December 22, 1962, issue showed a child imagining a Nativity scene in which a Wise Man is wearing glasses and the Virgin Mary has a blond perm.

December 31, 1962

The cover of your Christmas issue of *The New Yorker* maybe intends to be satire. I hope it is. But surely the mystery of the birth of Christ ought not to be travestied in such a cruel way. You perhaps were trying to show that the real meaning of Christmas had been destroyed by commercialism, but I think that portraying these hideous figures in the Nativity scene would be very distressing to the small people, and the humble people for whom Christ came.

MRS. MAXWELL F. PERKINS
New Canaan, Conn.

Letters should be as brief as possible, and sent with the writer's name, address, and daytime phone number to "In the Mail," The New Yorker, 20 West 43rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10036. They may be edited for length and clarity, or filed away for decades.

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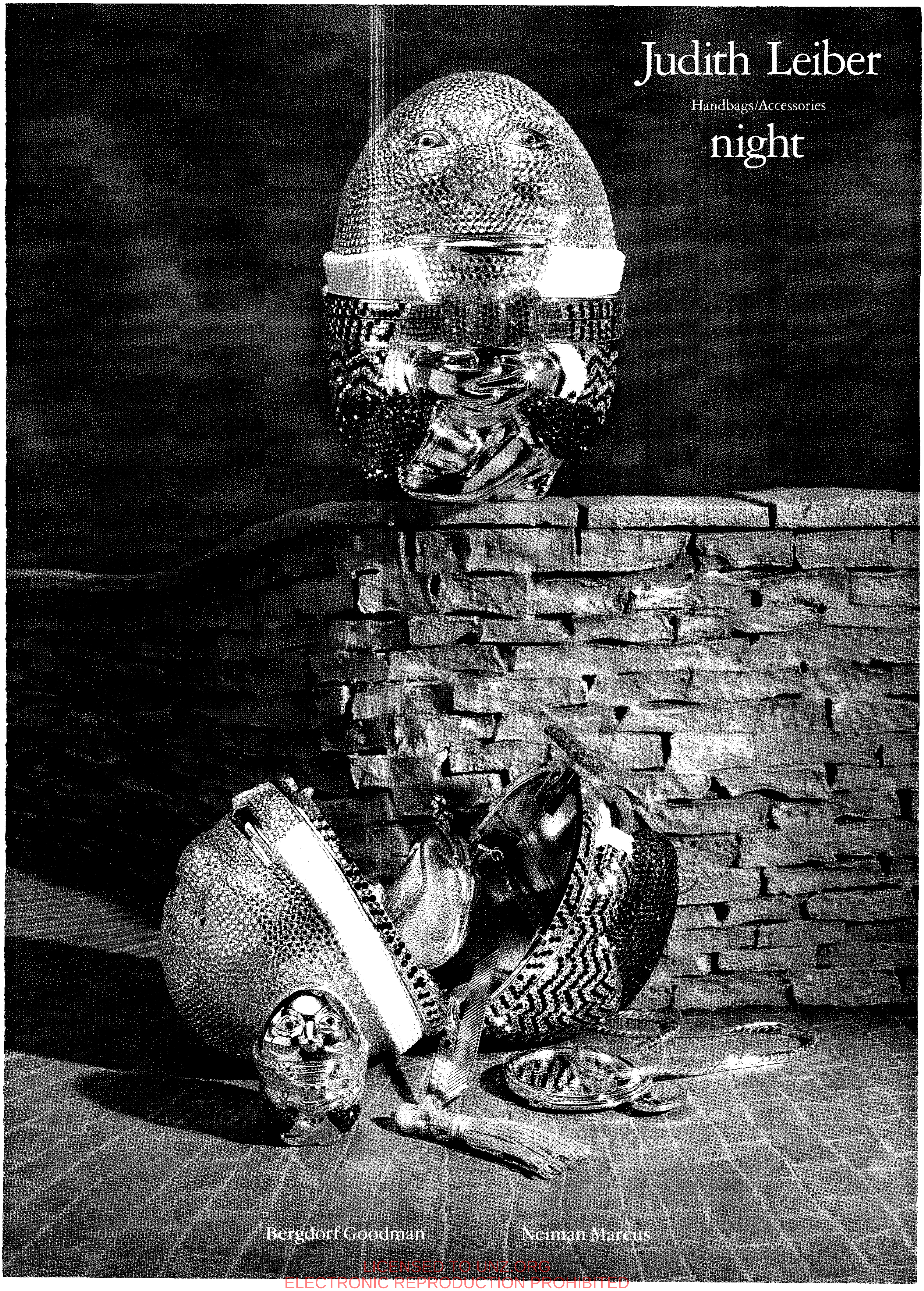
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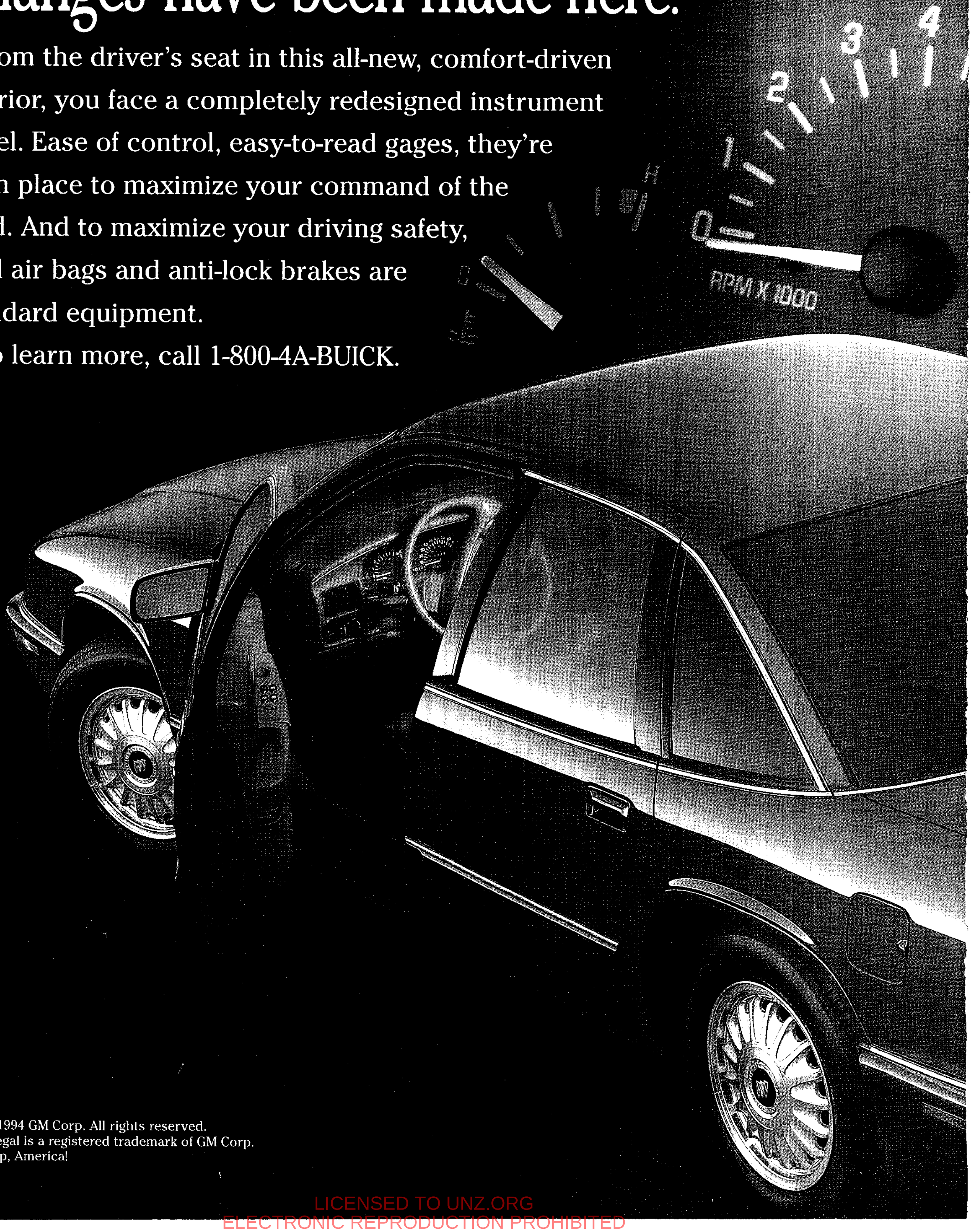

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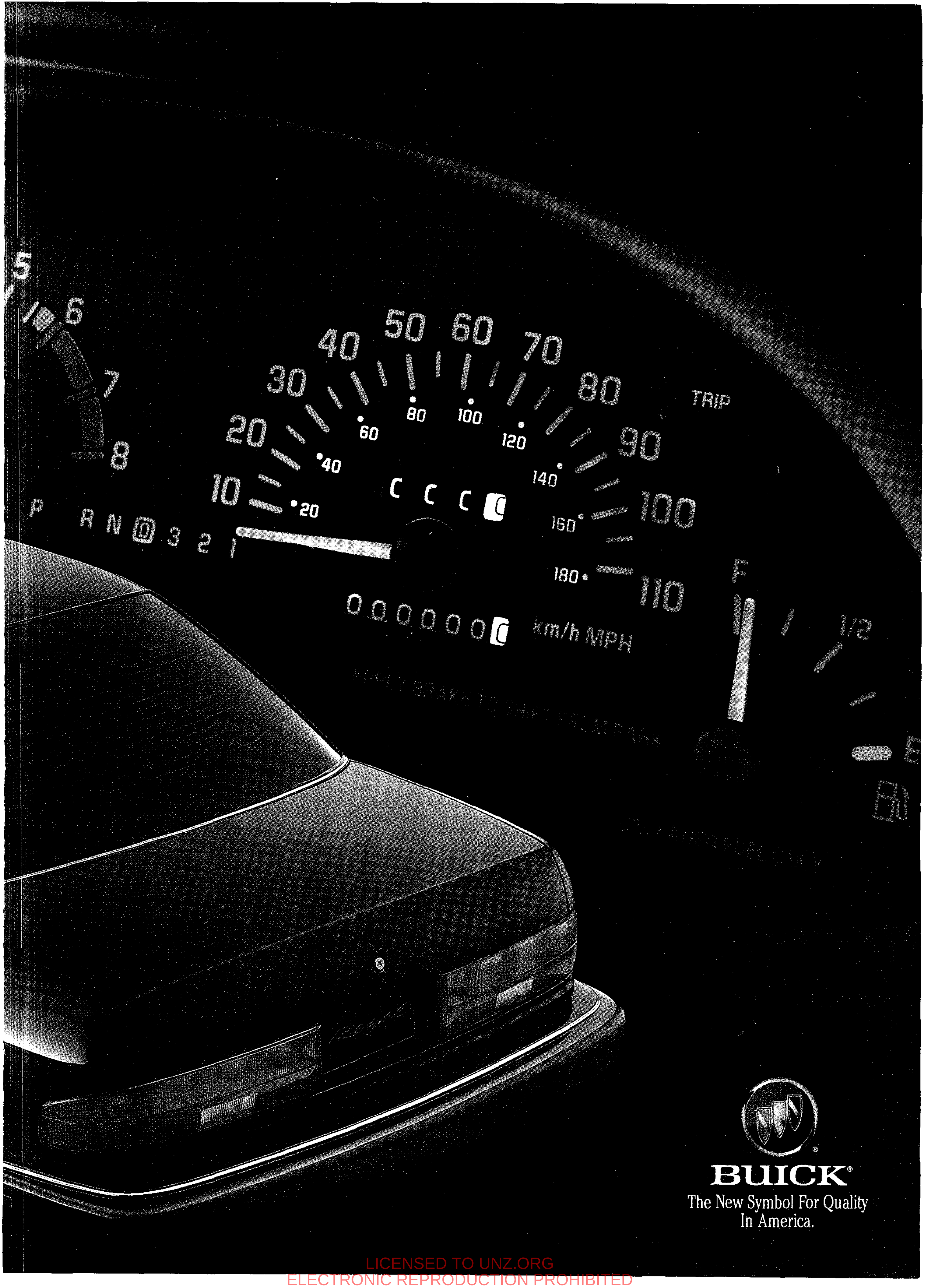
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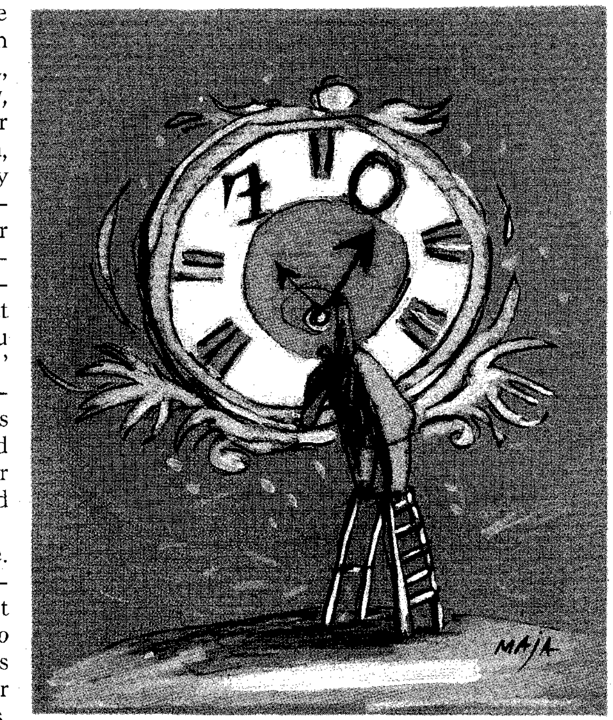
GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE THEATRE

Tornado Watch

IT has been a season of woman whirlwinds: Julie Halston, in "You Should Be So Lucky" (at the Westside Theatre), Amy Sedaris, in "One Woman Shoe" (at La Mama, through February 18), and now, just when it seemed that the weather might be clearing, Patricia Clarkson, in Nicky Silver's absurdist comedy "Raised in Captivity" (opening February 28 at the Vineyard). Her character, Bernadette Dixon, is described in Silver's script as "usually overwrought," and, given that she is prone to outbursts like "You puerile slab of stinking puke!," that's an understatement. Bernadette is one of the most outrageous figures in the Silver canon—and she seems even wilder next to her emotionally guarded brother and her poetic dentist husband.

She's also one of the most volatile. "Bernadette's emotions," according to Clarkson, "change in a split second from incredible lightness to incredible darkness, which makes this the most difficult part I've ever done." The emotional demands, even during rehearsals, have made the actress unusually reclusive: "Even though I'm still insanely hyper offstage—neither Bernadette nor I ever need a cup of coffee—I need more time alone, to cope with how severely the character wipes me out." Clarkson doesn't subscribe to the Method, but she does draw on her background as a high-strung child to keep pace with Silver's breakneck family story. "My sisters," she says, "didn't call me the banshee for nothing."



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OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.)

BUK—THE LIFE AND TIMES OF CHARLES BUKOWSKI—A play by Paul Peditto, based on the poet and novelist's writings. Previews Feb. 16-19. Opens Feb. 22 at 8 and runs through March 5. (HERE, 145 Sixth Ave., near Spring St. 647-0202.)

CALL ME MADAM—Tyne Daly steps into Ethel Merman's shoes (again) in a concert version of the 1950 Irving Berlin–Howard Lindsay–Russel Crouse musical. The brief engagement runs from Feb. 16 to Feb. 18. (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

CAMPING WITH HENRY AND TOM—A play by Mark St. Germain, inspired by an actual camping trip undertaken in 1921 by Henry Ford, President Harding, and Thomas Edison. With John Cunningham, Ken Howard, and Robert Prosky. Previews through Feb. 19. Opens Feb. 20 at 6:45. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 239-6200.)

CIRCUS LIFE—A new comedy by Murray Schisgal, about two male law partners who fall in love with the same younger woman. Mike Burstyn, Keith Langsdale, and Tresha Rodriguez are the *trois*. Previews through Feb. 26. Opens Feb. 27 at 8. (Kaufman, 534 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

THE COMPLEAT WORKS OF WLLM SHKSPR (ABRIDGED)—A hundred-and-five-minute version of the Bard's entire œuvre: comedies, tragedies, histories, sonnets, and poems. Written by Jess Winfield, Adam Long, and Daniel Singer. Previews through Feb. 25. Opens Feb. 26 at 7. (Westside Theatre, 407 W. 43rd St. 307-4100.)

DAMN YANKEES—Last year's revival of the 1955 musical returns from a two-month hiatus, with Jerry Lewis in his Broadway début, as Mr. Applegate. The new version is in previews beginning Feb. 28 and will open in March. (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.)

DEATH DEFYING ACTS—A trio of short plays by Woody Allen ("Central Park West"), David Mamet ("An Interview"), and Elaine May ("Hotline"). With Linda Lavin, Debra Monk, and Paul Guilfoyle. Previews begin Feb. 24. (Variety Arts, Third Ave. at 14th St. 239-6200.)

THE HEIRESS—A revival of Ruth and Augustus Goetz's 1947 play based on the Henry James novel "Washington Square." With Philip Bosco, Cherry Jones, Frances Sternhagen, and Jon Tenney. In previews. (Cort, 138 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

HENRY VI—Theatre for a New Audience has divided (and edited) Shakespeare's trilogy into two parts, which run in repertory. Previews continue through Feb. 24. Part I opens Feb. 25 at 2; Part II opens that night at 8. (St. Clement's, 423 W. 46th St. 279-4200.)

HOLIDAY HEART—In Cheryl L. West's play, an unusual guardian angel (Keith Randolph Smith) helps a girl (Afi McClendon) cope with growing up in the inner city. Tazewell Thompson is the director. Previews through Feb. 19. Opens Feb. 21 at 6:45. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

THE OLD LADY'S GUIDE TO SURVIVAL—June Havoc stars in a play by Mayo Simon. Preview on Feb. 15. Opens Feb. 16 at 6:45. (Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780.)

RAISED IN CAPTIVITY—A new play by Nicky Silver. Patricia Clarkson, Peter Frechette, Brian Kerwin, Anthony Rapp, and Leslie Ayvazian make up the cast. Previews through Feb. 26. Opens Feb. 28 at 8. (Vineyard Theatre, 108 E. 15th St. 353-3874.)

SILENCE, CUNNING, EXILE—The life of photographer Diane Arbus inspired this play by Stuart Greenman. With Elizabeth Marvel. Previews through Feb. 18. Opens Feb. 19 at 8. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 260-2400.)

SMOKEY JOE'S CAFÉ—THE SONGS OF LEIBER AND STOLLER—The early days of rock and roll are celebrated in a musical revue in which you can expect to hear "Hound Dog," "Jailhouse Rock," "Stand by Me," "Kansas City," and more. In previews. (Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200.)

SPOONBREAD AND STRAWBERRY WINE—Norma Jean Darden—model, caterer, actress—shares recipes and talks about her family, in a play inspired by the cookbook she wrote with her sister Carole Darden. Previews through Feb. 18. Opens Feb. 19 at 3. (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 840-3074.)

UNCLE VANYA—Tom Courtenay has the title role in Chekhov's play. The cast also includes Amanda Donohoe, James Fox, Werner Klemperer, and Elizabeth Franz. Previews through Feb. 22. Opens Feb. 23 at 8. (Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 239-6200.)

OPENED RECENTLY

AFTER-PLAY—Anne Meara's comedy, about two couples who get together for an after-theatre dinner, shows a real ear for the rhythms of conversation and the dynamics between couples who have known each other forever. Rue McClanahan, Merwin Goldsmith, Larry Keith, and the droll Barbara Barrie—old pros all—make a believable and entertaining foursome. Also with John C. Vennema and Rochelle Oliver. Directed by David Saint. (Reviewed in our issue of 2/13/95.) (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212. Closes March 5.)

BEAUTY'S DAUGHTER—A one-woman show by the New York-born poet-actress Dael Orlandersmith. (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 840-3074.)

BODY SHOP—The actors think they're in a musical about the dignity of stripping; many of the men in the audience, to judge from the whoops, think they're watching a strip show. Is this a great country, or what? Walter Marks, who wrote the song "I've Gotta Be Me," bears the responsibility, and Sue Lawless, for some reason, directed. (Westbeth Theatre Center, 151 Bank St. 741-0391.)

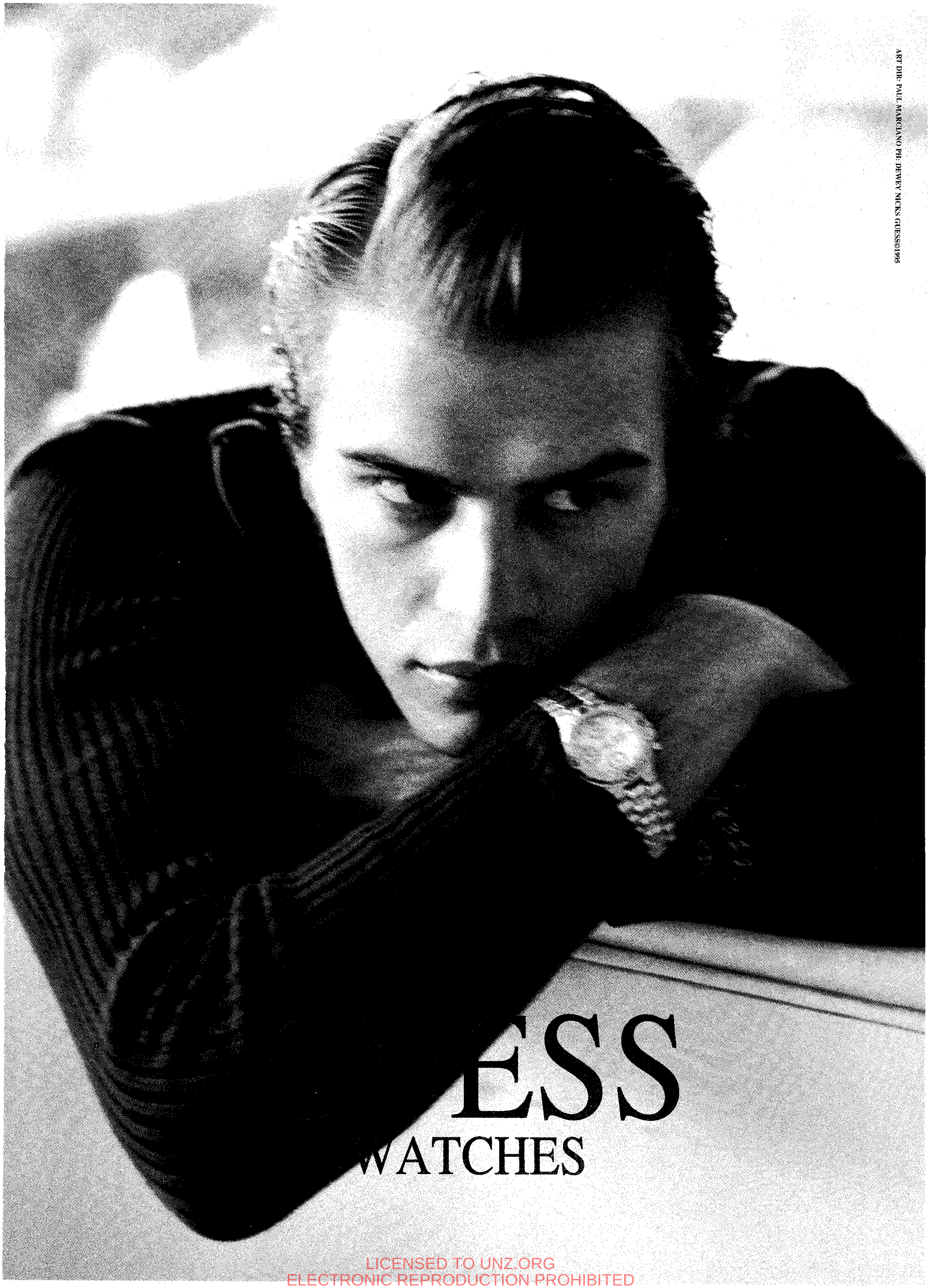
CARMEN—Ridiculous Theatrical Company playwrights Everett Quinton and Eureka have borrowed liberally from classic camp movies (especially "Caged") to come up with a suitably Ridiculous take on Prosper Mérimée's tragic tale. Quinton is in top form as the hot-blooded, coldhearted gypsy. (Charles Ludlam Theatre, 1 Sheridan Sq. 691-2271.)

HAPGOOD—Tom Stoppard's 1988 play looks at the world of espionage through the lens of particle physics. The production is as mesmerizing as the play is bewildering. Stockard Channing, Josef Sommer, and David Strathairn give confident, watchable performances. (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

I SENT A LETTER TO MY LOVE—A musical by Melissa Manchester and Jeffrey Sweet, based on the 1975 novel by Bernice Rubens. (Primary Stages, 354 W. 45th St. 333-4052. Closes Feb. 19.)

IPHIGENIA AND OTHER DAUGHTERS—Ellen McLaughlin is the author of this version of the Iphigenia and Electra stories; the theme is the

COLOR ILLUSTRATIONS BY DANIEL MAJA

ART DIR: PAUL MARCIANO PH: DEWEY NICKS GUESS©1995
ESS
WATCHES

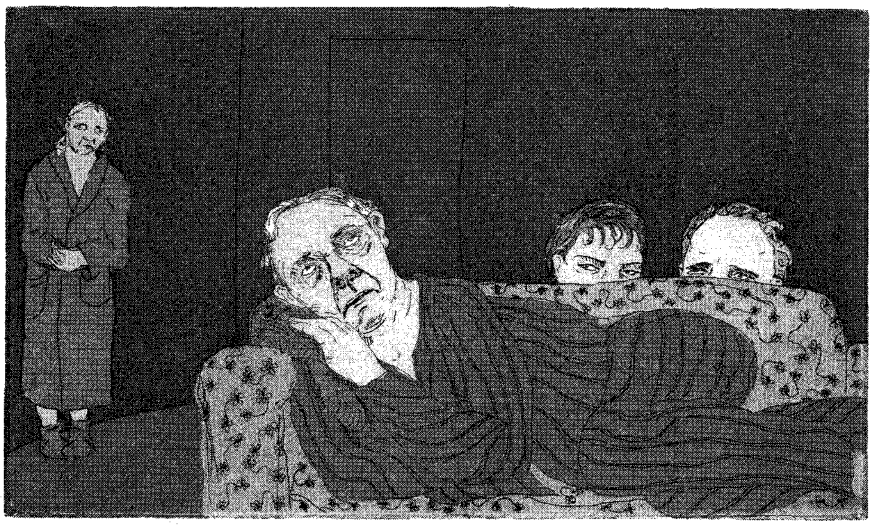
marginal status of women in wartime. (Classic Stage Company, 136 E. 13th St. 677-4210.)

I've Got the Shakes—In the center of Richard Foreman's latest piece of metaphysical mischief, Jan Leslie Harding gives a remarkably composed performance as Madeline X, a somewhat bewildered teacher who hopes to enlighten a place called Ignorance. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 533-4650.)

Jelly Roll!—The snakily elegant Vernel Bagneris plays Jelly Roll Morton, in a terrific show that traces the musician's transformation from New Orleans dandy into jazz legend. Morten Gunnar Larsen provides the thrilling piano accompaniment. (47th Street Theatre, 304 W. 47th St. 265-1086.)

Loot—The 1965 farce by Joe Orton. (House of Candles Theatre, 99 Stanton St. 353-3088.)

Love for Better & Verse—Barbara Feldon sings, reads love poems, and talks about romance in this one-woman show. (St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. 935-5820. Closes Feb. 26.)



Lynn Hawley, John Seitz, Barbara Gulan, and Craig Bockhorn, in "The Truth-Teller."

LARA TOMLIN

Love! Valour! Compassion!—Terrence McNally's drama about eight gay men, with Stephen Bogardus, John Glover, and the wonderful Nathan Lane. (11/14/94) (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

The Merchant of Venice—Ron Leibman is Shylock, in a production of Shakespeare's comedy directed by Barry Edelstein. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 260-2400. Closes Feb. 26.)

Missing Persons—A new play by Craig Lucas, which grew out of his 1981 one-act of the same name. (Atlantic, 336 W. 20th St. 239-6200. Closes Feb. 25.)

The Molière Comedies—Brian Bedford stars in a double bill of works by the seventeenth-century French dramatist: "The Imaginary Cuckold" and "The School for Husbands." (Roundabout, Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400.)

Nunsense 2: The Sequel—*In the second coming* of writer-director Dan Goggin's hit, five talented actresses take the veil and perform a revue to raise money for their convent. There's dancing, singing, boozing, and bingo, but none of it saves the show from the clutches of cliché. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321.)

Oedipus at Colonus—The Pearl Theatre Company offers Sophocles' tragedy, in a translation by Theodore Howard Banks. (Pearl, 80 St. Marks Pl. 598-9802.)

One Woman Shoe—The brother-and-sister writing team of David and Amy Sedaris bill themselves as the Talent Family, and it's a rare case of truth in advertising. In their hilariously absurd new show, three women who embody all possible facets of cluelessness are told by their social-services caseworker (played to Franklin Pangbornian perfection by David Rakoff) that they must each put on a one-woman show in order to keep their benefit checks coming. The five cast members are all funny in a number of roles, but Ms. Sedaris, with her chipmunk's overbite and her remarkably plastic face, is extraordinary—she burns her way into your memory with a comic branding iron. (La Mama, 74A E. 4th St. 475-7710. Closes Feb. 18.)

Public Enemy—Kenneth Branagh's play is not much more than a moody knockabout, but it does offer an enticing conceit: a Belfast boy (Paul Ronan) works the night-club circuit as a Jimmy Cagney impersonator until the Troubles turn his gangster fantasies into real-life drama. (Irish Arts Center, 553 W. 51st St. 757-3318.)

Show Boat—Harold Prince's bighearted production of the 1927 Jerome Kern–Oscar Hammerstein II musical is epic-size, full of life and full of vision. With John McMartin and Elaine Stritch as the patriarch and the matriarch of the floating theatre, and Lonette McKee, whose moving rendition of "Bill" is the show's most intimate moment. (10/17/94) (Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 307-4100.)

Sunset Boulevard—Glenn Close takes the monumental role of Norma Desmond and makes it something all her own, in Andrew Lloyd Webber's homage to Billy Wilder and Charles Brackett's 1950 fable of Hollywood corruption and dementia. Also with George Hearn, Alan Campbell, and Alice Ripley; directed by Trevor Nunn. (12/5/94) (Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 307-4007.)

That's Life!—A seriocomic revue about the variety of Jewish life in America. (Theatre East, 211 E. 60th St. 838-9090.)

The Truth-Teller—Circle Rep's second play of the season is this comedy by Joyce Carol Oates. (159 Bleecker St. 239-6200. Closes March 5.)

Twelfth Night—The Willow Cabin Theatre Company in Shakespeare's comedy. (Judith Anderson, 422 W. 42nd St. 886-1889. Closes March 5.)

Vita & Virginia—Eileen Atkins' Virginia Woolf shares the stage with Vanessa Redgrave's Vita Sackville-West in a play that Atkins put together from the letters that the women exchanged during their eighteen-year friendship. Redgrave is imposing and glamorous, but the brilliance of Woolf's writing stacks the theatrical deck in Atkins' favor, and she gives a quietly sensational, riveting performance. Zoe Caldwell directed. (12/12/94) (Union Square Theatre, 100 E. 17th St. 307-4100.)

You Should Be So Lucky—A long and largely unrewarding comedy in which Charles Busch appears, out of drag, as a shrinking-violet electrologist who comes into his own via an unlikely benefactor (Stephen Pearlman). Nell Campbell plays his sister, and Julie Halston is a veritable force of nature as a Scarsdale matron. (Westside Theatre, 407 W. 43rd St. 307-4100.)

The Young Man from Atlanta—In nineteen-fifties Houston, a strange secret unravels the lives of an aging couple (Ralph Waite and Carlin Glynn) who are deeply at odds in their efforts to cope with the recent, mysterious death of their son. Horton Foote's new play lacks a proper dénouement, but it is a penetrating work, rich with tension. Peter Masterson's staging is fluid, and the acting is true. (Kampo Cultural Center, 31 Bond St. 279-4200. Closes Feb. 26.)

LONG RUNS

ALL IN THE TIMING: John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 239-6200. . . . **BEAUTY AND THE BEAST:** Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 307-4100. . . . **BLOOD BROTHERS:** Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES:** Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. . . . **CATS:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. . . . **CRAZY FOR YOU:** Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. . . . **GREASE!:** Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 239-6200. . . . **AN INSPECTOR CALLS:** Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **JACKIE MASON: POLITICALLY INCORRECT:** Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **KISS OF THE SPIDER WOMAN:** Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **MISS SAIGON:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **STOMP:** Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 477-2477. . . . **THREE TALL WOMEN:** Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 239-6200. . . . **TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING:** St. John's Church, 81 Christopher St. 279-4200. . . . **THE WHO'S TOMMY:** St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.

DANCE

New York City Ballet—Final performances of the season. Feb. 15 at 8: "Swan Lake," "Danses de Cour," and "Dances at a Gathering." . . . ¶ Feb. 16 at 8: "In G Major," "Opus 19/The Dreamer," and "Gershwin Concerto." . . . ¶ Feb. 17 at 8: "Jewels." . . . ¶ Feb. 18 at 2: "Square Dance," "Episodes and Sarcasms," and "Vienna Waltzes." . . . ¶ Feb. 18 at 8: "Huoah," "Afternoon of a Faun," "Antique Epigraphs," and "Vienna Waltzes." . . . ¶ Feb. 19 at 1: "Swan Lake," "Danses de Cour," and "Gershwin Concerto." . . . ¶ Feb. 19 at 7: "Jewels." . . . ¶ Feb. 21 at 8: "Huoah," "Dances at a Gathering," and "Symphony in Three Movements." . . . ¶ Feb. 22 at 8: "Symphony in Three Movements," "Opus 19/The Dreamer," and "Gershwin Concerto." . . . ¶ Feb. 23 at 8: "Swan Lake," "Operetta Affezionata," and "Dances at a Gathering." . . . ¶ Feb. 24 at 8: "Danses de Cour," "Episodes and Sarcasms," and "Symphony in Three Movements." . . . ¶ Feb. 25 at 2 and 8: "Jewels." . . . ¶ Feb. 26 at 3, a family matinée: "Swan Lake," "Romeo and Juliet," "Glazounov Pas de Deux," and "Gershwin Concerto." (New York State Theatre. 870-5570.)

Margie Gillis—The solo dancer with the waist-length hair, in an evening of seven works. With guest artists Robert LaFosse and Paola Styron. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Feb. 15-18 at 8 and Feb. 19 at 2.)

The Ohio Ballet—The twenty-one-member ballet company, in a program of new and repertory works and a revival of "Big City," by Kurt Jooss. (Joyce Theatre. Feb. 21-24 at 8, Feb. 25 at 2 and 8, and Feb. 26 at 2 and 7:30.)

Peggy Baker—The elegant, intense Canadian's first New York performances of her modern-dance solos, which are actually duets of a sort: her Russian-born pianist, Andrew Burashko, not only chooses the music (Prokofiev, Liszt, Chopin) but also shares the stage. It's a relationship, according to Baker, like that of a lieder singer with her

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DANCE—Cont'd

accompanist. (The Kitchen, 512 W. 19th St. 255-5793. Feb. 16-19 at 8.)

Libre-Échange—A free-trade dance festival, featuring dancers and choreographers from our fellow NAFTA countries. Feb. 16-19 at 8:30: William Douglas Dance, performing half of the solos from "Six Solos / Sextet" and the trio "We Were Warned." (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 674-8194.)

Cydney Wilkes—The solo dancer, in an autobiographical work, "Road." (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. Feb. 16-18 at 8, and Feb. 19 at 3.)

"Jazz: From Classical to Funk"—K-Broadway, the twenty-two-member jazz-dance ensemble from Tokyo. (Kaye Playhouse, Hunter College, Park Ave. at 68th St. 772-4448. Feb. 23-24 at 8.)

Risa Jaroslow—The choreographer continues her investigation of her Jewish heritage. (Dance Theatre Workshop. Feb. 23-25 at 8, and Feb. 26 at 3.)

American Tap Dance Orchestra—Two weekends of performance at the Woodpeckers Tap Dance Center. Feb. 17 at 8:30: Solo and ensemble premières. Feb. 18 and Feb. 24-25, at 8:30: Brenda Bufalino and the A.T.D.O., in compositions and improvisations. (170 Mercer St. 219-8284.)

Lakota Sioux Indian Dance Theatre—The fifteen-member company from the Rosebud Reservation, South Dakota. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. Feb. 18 at 8.)

Face the Music and Dance—The fractured rhythms and loose-limbed melodies of guitarist Bill Frisell are practically sonic dance, so a collaboration with choreographer Sally Silvers is a natural. After separate sets, Frisell's band and Silvers improvise together. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. Feb. 23 at 8.)

NIGHT LIFE

Non-Stop

THE pianist Joe Bushkin is a stream of consciousness. A handsome, Lincolnesque pipestem, he is a non-stop talker who effortlessly mixes jokes, autobiography, and epigrams ("I don't drop names; names drop on me"; "I was an introvert outwardly and an extrovert inwardly"). And he is a non-stop pianist who, blown about by his long melodic lines and flashing six-octave runs, sways wildly from side to side, rears back so far he disappears, and makes hypnotic faces. Bushkin, now seventy-eight, worked with Bunny Berigan, Muggsy Spanier, Tommy Dorsey, and Louis Armstrong. More or less retired, he lives in California, but he takes New York gigs occasionally (to forestall fans asking him, "Didn't you used to be Joe Bushkin?"), and sometimes he even brings his own piano. He will be at the Tavern on the Green for two weeks, through February 26, with Howard Alden on guitar, Milt Hinton on bass, and Ray Mosca on drums, and if audiences are lucky, friends like the trombonist Dan Barrett and the tenor saxophonist Buddy Tate may drop in for the second set.

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CONCERTS

Carnaval '95—A multicultural fête, featuring parade rhythms and R. & B.-cured brass by New Orleans' Dirty Dozen Brass Band. A steel-drum procession with drummer Rudy King will start things off, followed by the Silhouettes Steel Orchestra, which has performed at St. Patrick's Cathedral and with the Rolling Stones. The Brazilian singer Dandara will be on hand to evoke the unfettered quality of a Rio Carnival. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. Feb. 19 at 7.)

Huun-Huur-Tu—Tuva, a bump on the Siberian-Mongolian border, was once known principally for its exotic postage stamps. Now the tiny nation is gaining broader notice through this quartet of musical ambassadors, who practice the art of *khöömei* (throat singing). *Khöömei* masters produce two tones simultaneously: a deep, prolonged belch, with a whistling-teapot descant. Huun-Huur-Tu's concert promises numerous delights apart from *khöömei,* including obbligatos played on a sheep-kneebone-and-bull-scrotum rattle and such invigorating lyrics as "If the tree hadn't rotted, one could have used it for a cattle fence or a yurt pole." (Symphony Space. Feb. 17 at 8.)

Andrea Marcovicci—With the American Symphony Orchestra, in "I'll Be Seeing You: Love Songs of World War II." (Avery Fisher Hall. 875-5030. Feb. 15 at 8.)

"Friends of Alec Wilder"—A concert tribute to the late composer, with Eileen Farrell, Marlene VerPlanck, the Loonis McGlohon trio, the New York Philharmonic Horn Quartet, and the American Saxophone Quartet. (St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. Feb. 18 at 2. Tickets at the door on the afternoon of the concert.)

Richard Stoltzman and George Shearing—The clarinettist and the pianist in a concert of jazz and classical works, including pieces by Schumann, Debussy, Gershwin, and Ellington. (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. Feb. 18 at 8.)

Kodo—The Japanese percussionists. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Feb. 22 at 8.)

Ladysmith Black Mambazo—The South African a-cappella group. The Holmes Brothers open the show. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. Feb. 23 at 8.)

Carnegie Hall Jazz Band—A trumpet tribute to Louis Armstrong, Dizzy Gillespie, and Miles Davis and a seventy-fifth-birthday party for Clark Terry, an illustrious brassman who belongs in the same master class. (Carnegie Hall. Feb. 23 at 8.)

"A Forties Jazz Tapestry"—Trumpeter Jimmy Owens leads the Jazz Foundation of America

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LINDA ALLARD
ELLEN TRACY

Orchestra. Guests include the veteran pianist Billy Taylor. (Town Hall. Feb. 24 at 8.)

"Boys Night Out"—An all-star cabaret concert, with Tom Andersen, Jeff Harnar, Phillip Officer, and David Staller. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. Feb. 25 at 8.)

Varttina—A Finnish folk-music group. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 362-8719. Feb. 25 at 8:30.)

Lyrics & Lyricists—The series continues its season with a salute to the late Jule Styne. (92nd Street Y. Feb. 26 at 2:30 and 8 and Feb. 27 at 2 and 8.)

Tibet House Benefit—Fontella Bass, David Byrne, Jimmie Dale Gilmore, Allen Ginsberg, Philip Glass, Spalding Gray, the Gyuto Monks, Katell Keineg, Ashley MacIsaac, and Natalie Merchant. (Carnegie Hall. Feb. 28 at 7:30.)

CLUBS

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type indicates some of the more notable performers in town. Musicians and night-club proprietors lead complicated lives, so it is advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.)

Academy, 234 W. 43rd St.—Feb. 27: Grandiose Scottish art-rockers **SIMPLE MINDS** return from the missing-in-action file. (For information about tickets, call 307-7171.)

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—Feb. 17-18: **ALISON KRAUSS & UNION STATION.** In 1994, Krauss made an album with the Cox Family, a Louisiana-based gospel quintet, and the result was sweet heartland harmony—a high, unlonesome sound familiar to fans of her recordings with Union Station, her own bluegrass band. "Now That I've Found You," her latest album, is a collection of pristine gems. She can be uneven in live performance, but her voice is one of the great pleasures of the nineties, and she's worth seeking out. Feb. 21: Funky diva **DARLENE LOVE.**

Brownies, 169 Avenue A, at 10th St. (429-8392)—Feb. 15: **SKELETON KEY.** With **CELLOPHANE** and **INDUSTRIAL TEE PEE.** Feb. 19: Up-and-coming rockers **TUSCADERO.**

Chicago B.L.U.E.S., 73 Eighth Ave., at 13th St. (924-9755)—Feb. 17-18: **MAGIC SLIM AND THE TEARDROPS.** Feb. 22-23: **BIG TIME SARAH** burns down the house.

The Cooler, 416 W. 14th St. (229-0785)—Feb. 18: **JOHN ZORN'S PUEBLO** and **DIM SUM CLIP JOB.** Feb. 19: **PAPA JUBE.** Feb. 25: The amazing **HARVEY SID FISCHER.** Connoisseurs of camp, awake! The last time we saw Harvey Sid, he was on California public-access television performing his musical rendition of the horoscope ("talk about the Taurus, talk about the bully, bull, bull"). His smoldering adenoidal sensuality has to be seen to be believed. Wednesday nights are given over to experimental d.j. spinoffs. Monday nights are free, with host **ELLIOTT SHARP.**

Irving Plaza, 17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—Feb. 15: Singer **ANI DI FRANCO.** Feb. 17: **FROM GOOD HOMES,** with **EVERYTHING.** Feb. 22: **THE RAKE'S PROGRESS,** with **THE CAULFIELDS.** . . . ¶ The Swing Dance Society gathers here every Sunday night, at the Continental Club. Sets from eight until midnight. For information on the society, call 696-9737.

Maxwell's, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken. (1-201 798-4064)—Feb. 16: Dinosaur Jr.'s **J. MASCIS** appears unplugged. Like Evan Dando's chin, Mascis's guitar playing has inspired a great deal of hagiography. (*Newsweek* recently called him "the most melodic and eloquent guitarist that punk has produced," which is a bit of a stretch—his solos are much faster and trickier than any self-respecting punk's.) Mascis can play, but it's his dark, throaty voice and dislocated lyrics that make Dinosaur Jr. particularly interesting. Feb. 18: The **REBIRTH BRASS BAND.**

Mercury Lounge, 217 E. Houston St. (260-4700)—Feb. 16-17: **MARSHALL CRENSHAW.** This pop polymath has had a roller-coaster career since he released his first album in 1982. Last year he published a marvellous anthology of reviews and critical essays, "Hollywood Rock: A Guide to Rock 'n' Roll in the Movies," and released an independent-label album, ". . . My Truck Is My Home," which surveyed his entire career. He's sometimes too brainy for his own good, but when he hits his stride, he can rock out with the best. **SEED** and **LETTERS TO CLEO,** two savage alternative-rock bands, play on Feb. 18. Spoken-word ingénue **MAGGIE ESTEP** says interesting things on Feb. 25. With **DAN ZANES,** a wafer-thin rock-and-roll balladeer (and ex-Del Fuegos guitarist) who writes bleak, dreamy tunes in the manner of Chris Isaak.

Paddy Reilly's Music Bar, 519 Second Ave., at 29th St. (686-1210)—**BLACK 47** plays on Saturdays, and Speir Mor (Gaelic for Big Sky) performs for a hearty following on Fridays. Séisiún—a traditional Irish jam—is on Thursday nights.

Roseland, 239 W. 52nd St. (247-0200)—Feb. 15-16 belongs to **HOLE.** Courtney Love has been alternately portrayed as a rock visionary and a drug-addled psychopath—as if there's a difference. Her flamboyance is undeniable, as is her Madonnaesque ability to manipulate the media and keep the public in her thrall, but she isn't in the same league as her late husband, Kurt Cobain, or Polly Harvey, for that matter. Still, Hole's album "Live Through This" was one of last year's best, and this is a must-see show, if only to be able to say the following day, when Love appears on Page Six, that you were there. Feb. 17-18: **SLAYER** sings about love, Satan, and growing up. With **BIOHAZARD.** Feb. 23-24: The **DAVE MATTHEWS BAND.** It's too early to declare this Charlottesville quintet the new Pride of the South, but they're certainly the Pride of Our Nation's Undergraduates, who pack every show, sing along with every song, and purchase official Dave screen-savers for their laptops. Devotees of orange hair are in for a serious bummer, but if your idea of a swell time accommodates a charismatic singer coiling dramatic melodies around a mix of pop, funk, folk, and world beat, here's your gig. With **BIG HEAD TODD AND THE MONSTERS,** another jam-happy combo.

Courtney Love, of Hole, at Roseland.

S.O.B.'s, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—Tuesday nights, S.O.B.'s presents Soul Kitchen, an evening of seventies funk and R. & B. Thursday nights belong to Giant Step, a roving collective of musicians, rappers, and d.j.s who mix jazz, funk, and hip-hop. Dining.

Tramps, 51 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—**JOHNNY (GUITAR) WATSON** lays it down on Feb. 17. Feb. 18: **BUCKWHEAT ZYDECO.** The eponymous ambassador of zydeco music is a true party professional. Seasoned by decades of touring, he knows how to make even the most uptight New York crowd dance. **JEFFERSON STARSHIP** waddles in on Feb. 23. Pencil-mustached R. & B. crooner **EL DEBARGE** hits the high notes on Feb. 24. Feb. 27: Mardi Gras with **LOUP GAROU** and special guests.

Webster Hall, 125 E. 11th St. (353-1600)—A byzantine disco wonderland with four floors, a coffee shop, and a wig boutique. Wednesday is drag night. Psychedelic Thursdays feature grunge acts and cheap beer.

Wetlands, 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—The club celebrates its sixth birthday on Feb. 18, with **MOE.** Feb. 23: The **GEFKENS.** Feb. 24: The **SKADANKS.** Feb. 27: **CYCOMOTOGOAT.**

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

Algonquin Hotel, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—Singer and guitarist **JOHN PIZZARELLI** is currently at work in the woody nook known as the Oak Room. Dining.

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Through Feb. 19: **TITO PUENTE'S GOLDEN JAZZ ALL STARS.** Feb. 21-26: The **BRECKER BROTHERS.** Dining.

Bradley's, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—Through Feb. 18: **KENNY BARRON** and **PAUL WEST.** Feb. 19: The **CRAIG HANDY** trio. The ever-tasteful guitarist **PETER LEITCH** (Feb. 20-25) has used the ever-effusive pianist **JOHN HICKS** on a number of recordings. Together they make a sweet-and-sour match-up that sounds just right. With bassist **RUFUS REID.** Dining.

Fat Tuesday's, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7900)—**BOBBY WATSON,** here Feb. 21-26, is the Cannonball Adderly of our day: an exemplary alto player and a canny bandleader who revels in the pleasures of connecting with a crowd. **AL GREY,** who begins a one-week run on Feb. 28, can make his trombone talk. He's got the skills and tricks that come from a lifetime of playing swing (including an illustrious stint in the Basie band). His solos are elegant soliloquies. On Mondays, guitarist-inventor **LES PAUL** leads a trio. Dining.

Fez, 380 Lafayette St. (533-7000)—The **MINGUS BIG BAND** still packs them in every Thursday. Directed by baritone saxophonist Ronnie Cuber, the fourteen-piece ensemble concentrates exclusively on the tricky, cacophonous work of the late Charles Mingus. Dining.

Fifty Seven Fifty Seven, 57 E. 57th St. (758-5757)—Wednesdays through Saturdays, **DONALD JOHNSTON** is the featured pianist; on weekends he performs with a trio. Dining.

Iridium, 44 W. 63rd St. (582-2121)—Feb. 14-18: **SONNY FORTUNE.**

Knitting Factory, 74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—Feb. 16-18 and Feb. 23-25: The **LOUNGE LIZARDS.** You've got to hand it to John Lurie. For almost twenty years now he's been daring listeners to decide: poseur or visionary? Either way, it's hard not to like the Lizards' wacky G-men schtick. Feb. 22: **PAUL MOTIAN.** The compact, perfectly aligned trio that the drummer usually leads will metamorphose into a quartet for this gig.

Metropolis, 31 Union Sq. W. (675-2300)—Feb. 17-18: Drummer **CHARLIE PERSIP,** who appeared on juicy recordings by Dizzy Gillespie and

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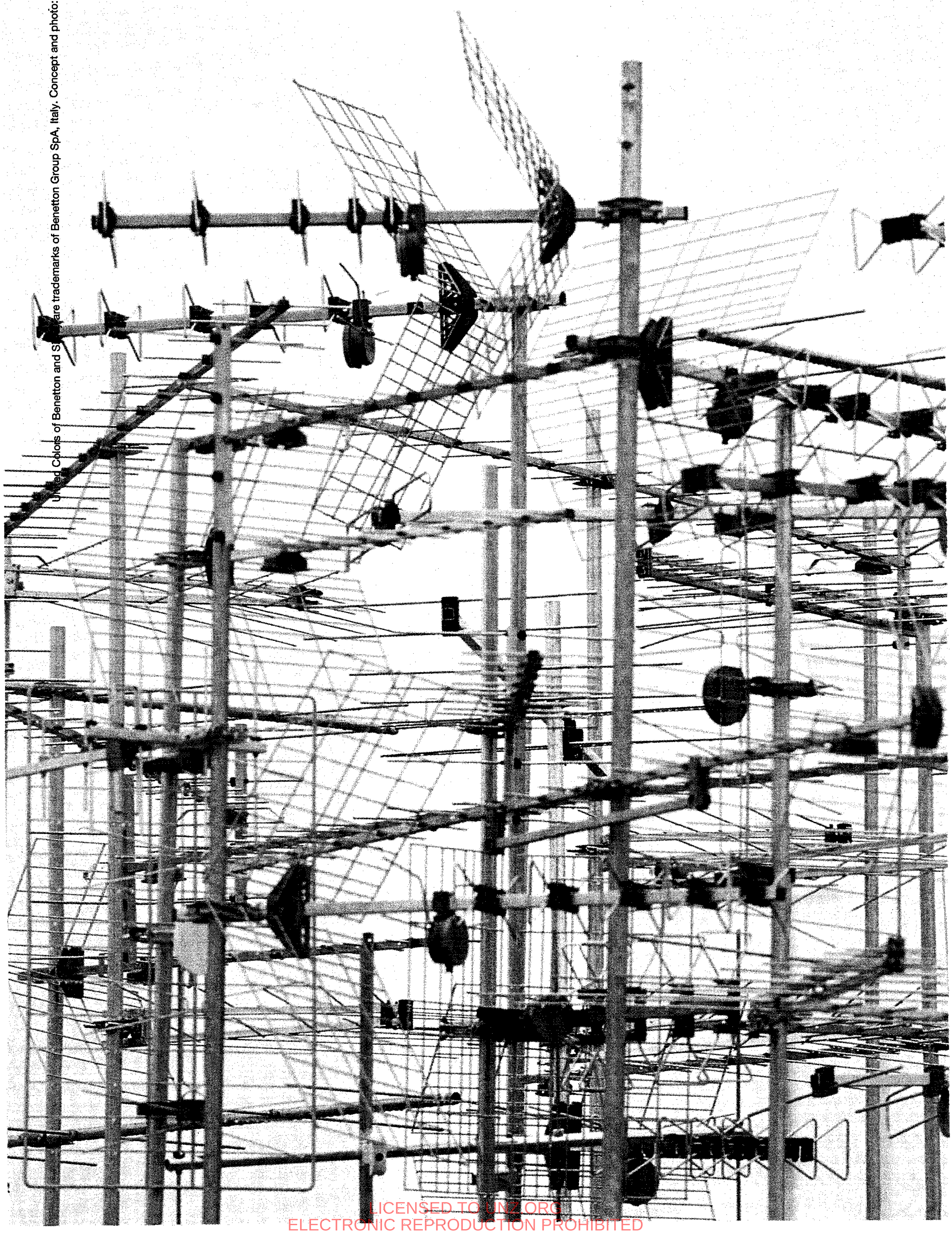

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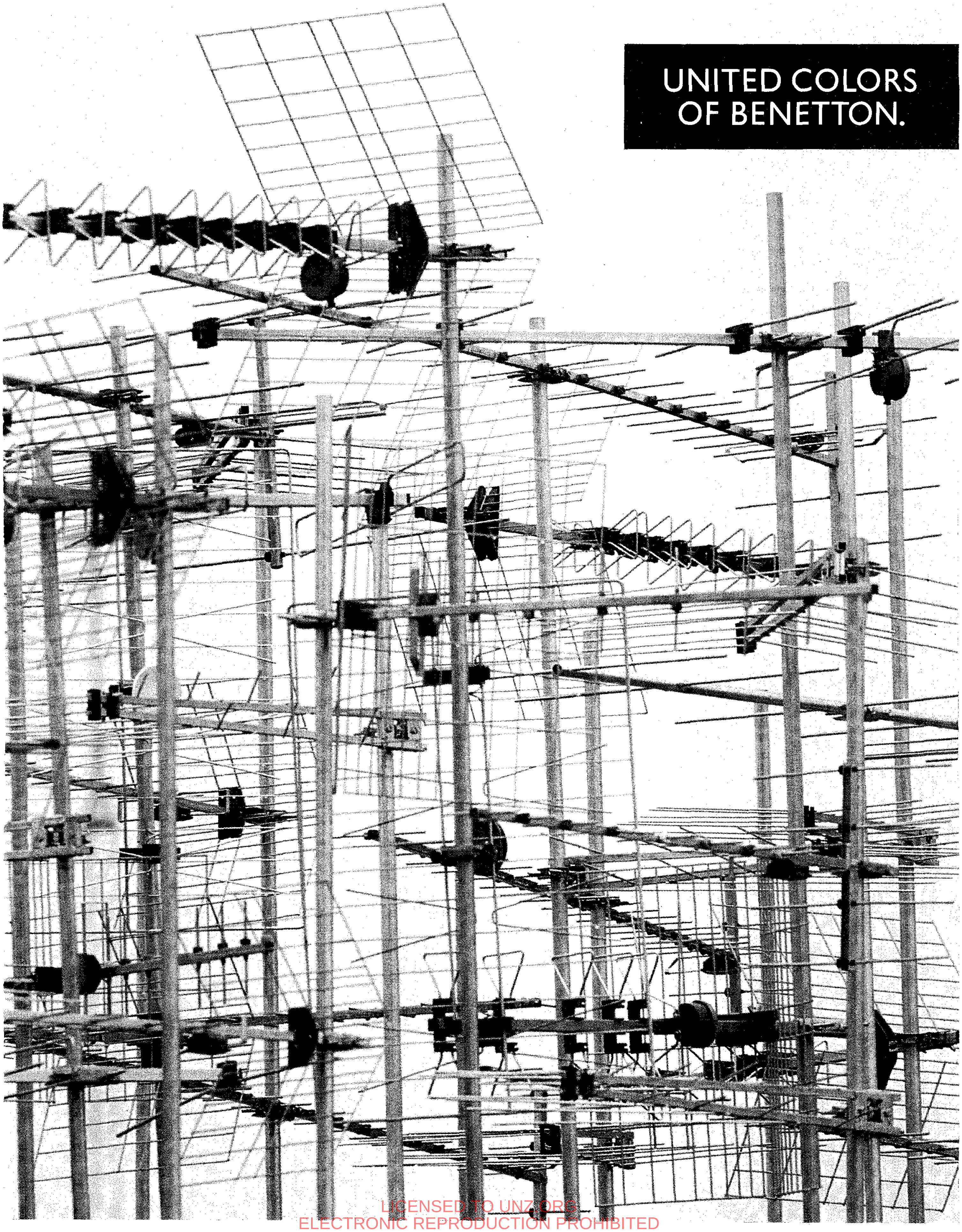
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Eric Dolphy in the fifties and sixties. Tuesdays are given over to the **GEORGE GEE ORCHESTRA**, a seventeen-piece swing band.

RAINBOW & STARS, 30 Rockefeller Plaza. (632-5000)—It's February—time again for **ROSEMARY CLOONEY**. (Too bad February is the shortest month of the year.) Forty-four years after her first big hit, "Come On-a My House," Clooney's voice is still warm and welcoming. In performance, she's fresh and bouncy and funny, and like her fellow-sexagenarian Tony Bennett, she's been attracting an ever-broadening audience of hipsters. Her new record, "Demi-Centennial," celebrates fifty years in show biz. Closed Mondays.

SWEET BASIL, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—Guitarist **JOHN ABERCROMBIE**, in through Feb. 19, sure loves those pesky electronic effects, but his melodic logic and knotty phrasing always manage to slip through unscathed. Feb. 21-26: **CHARLIE SEPULVEDA AND THE TURNAROUND**. Feb. 28: The **JAVON JACKSON** quartet (with **RON CARTER**) begins a weeklong run. Jackson, a fluid and intelligent tenor saxophonist and impressive fledgling hard-bopper is on a roll; his "When the Time Is Right" was one of last year's keepers. He'll be joined by bassist extraordinaire Carter. An electrified big band belonging to trumpeter **MILES EVANS** is in action on Mondays. *Dining.*

TAVERN ON THE GREEN, Central Park W. at 67th St. (873-3200)—**JOE BUSHKIN** is the main attraction through Feb. 26.

VILLAGE VANGUARD, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—The world's most famous jazz club turns sixty this week, and it's still going strong, with a star-studded anniversary lineup of poets, comics, jazzbos, and bohemians. Feb. 21: Cabaret singer **SHIRLEY HORN**. Feb. 22: Comedian **DICK GREGORY**. Feb. 23: Gap model **ALLEN GINSBERG**. Feb. 24: Ivory tickler **BOBBY SHORT**. Feb. 25: Rib tickler **PROFESSOR IRWIN COREY**. Feb. 26: Folk legend **PETE SEEGER**. Above and beyond the other festivities, the big news at the Vanguard anniversary party is the return of **JIMMY ROWLES**, who performs Feb. 24-25. Illness has kept this wonderful pianist and singer on the West Coast for the past five years or so; having him back will dispel the winter blues. Rowles' genius is deceptive: he sneaks up and around a song, dropping sly accents into unexpected places and slipping discrete, funny chords where silences should be. His knowledge of the popular song and jazz repertory is encyclopedic, and his craggy, knowing whisper of a voice gets into the crevices of a lyric. He'll be joined by his daughter Stacy, a trumpeter and flugelhornist. A master class for a whole new generation of players. The **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA** continues to hold sway every Monday.

VISIONES, 125 Macdougal St., at W. 3rd St. (673-5576)—Feb. 15-16: **BOBBY PREVITE**. Certainly the most assured musician to surface on the downtown scene in the past decade, Previte is a superb drummer, a daring composer, and an articulate bandleader. His ensemble speaks in visionary tongues. Feb. 21: The **HERBIE NICHOLS PROJECT**. Nichols, an underappreciated pianist and composer who died in 1967, recorded little and passed his life in relative obscurity. The work he left behind is golden—full of anomalous compositions with an outsider tinge and a formal perfection that rivals Thelonious Monk's. Since Nichols only recorded in a piano-trio setting, it will be a pleasure to hear his music fleshed out with a horn-driven band.

ZINNO, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—**HAROLD MABERN** and **JAMIL NASSER** begin a weeklong stand on Feb. 27. Currently on a busman's holiday from George Coleman's band, Mabern will display his piano virtuosity, blending cornbread funk with bop vitality. Nasser, another Colemanite, will demonstrate how to play the bass in perfect time, with wit and with a cavernous, woody tone. Dining.

ART

Drawing Blood

FANS of Patrice Chereau's blood-soaked and bodice-ripping movie epic "Queen Margot" will find a quieter but no less riveting vision of the sixteenth century in "The French Renaissance in Prints from the Bibliothèque Nationale de France" (at the Metropolitan Museum of Art; through March 19). There's no Margot here, but her dysfunctional family—the scheming mother, Catherine de Médicis; the dissolute brother, Henri III; the unloving husband, Henri of Navarre—keeps showing up. The exhibit gives plenty of play to the religious and dynastic violence, but it adds another dimension by documenting the complex artistic temperament, elegant and perverse, that flourished during that tormented era.

The art of the French Renaissance is typically associated with the refined, Italianate school of Fontainebleau. But some of the masterpieces here are rough amalgams of medieval and Renaissance styles. In his horrific "Suicide of Judas," for example, Jean Duvet (1485-1561) displays a sure grasp of the Italian style in the manner of Mantegna, but looks back to medieval narrative technique in his depiction, in a single panel, of Judas first weeping over his betrayal of Christ and then killing himself. Hanging from a tree, suspended over a hellfire-belching well, with a small demon attending his corpse, he makes a fitting image for a bedevilled French century.

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—"R. B. Kitaj." A retrospective of more than seventy paintings by the expatriate artist, who for nearly four decades has lived and worked in London. Starts Feb. 17. (A concurrent show is at Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St.) . . . ¶ Some eighty examples of the creative confluence of Eastern and Western styles are on view in "Orientalism: Visions of the East in Western Dress." From eighteenth-century court gowns to sequinned flapper's shifts to the recent inspirations of Issey Miyake and Romeo Gigli, luxury and fantasy are the leitmotivs. Through March 19. . . . ¶ "Greek Gold." Forget embarrassment—this is a *humiliation* of riches, as splendid an exhibition of Classical jewelry as we're ever likely to see. Choice items from the Met and the British Museum have been augmented with lovely pieces from the northern coast of the Black Sea—a rare loan from the Hermitage. The workmanship throughout is so delicate that you may want to bring a magnifying glass. Through March 26. . . . ¶ "I Tell My Heart: The Art of Horace Pippin." A selection of powerful primitive paintings by a self-taught black artist from Pennsylvania (1888-1946). Works by Jacob Lawrence, Bill Traylor, John Kane, Grandma Moses, and Arnold Friedman are also on view. . . . ¶ "The French Renaissance in Prints from the Bibliothèque Nationale de France." Through March 19. . . . ¶ "Painting and Illumination in Early Renaissance Florence, 1300-1450." Through Feb. 26. . . . ¶ "Thomas Eakins and the Metropolitan Museum of Art." Through Feb. 26. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

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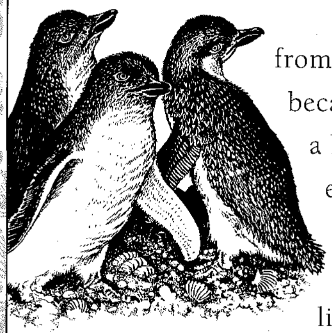
Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St.—"Kandinsky: Compositions." Wassily Kandinsky, the Russian painter who invented abstractionism, groped his way there with gingerly care, marking the milestones in his evolution with a numbered series of large-scale "Compositions." The first three were destroyed during the Second World War; in this quiet little blockbuster exhibition, the museum has united the seven surviving canvases for the first time. Compositions IV, V, and VI, with their dreamy imagery and transcendent colorism, can be seen as a distillation of the course of early modernism from figuration to pure form. The later, geometric works are harder to love at first, but ultimately they deliver with just as much force. Enhanced by preliminary studies and by photographs of the lost works, the exhibit documents the progress of Kandinsky's expanding vision with elegance and precision. Through April 25. . . . ¶ Nancy Rubins' new installation, "MOMA and Airplane Parts," is a suspended accumulation of torn and bent engine casings, fuselages, and wings. Through March 14. . . . ¶ "Max Beckmann Prints" includes lithographs, drypoints, and woodcuts from throughout the German Expressionist's career. . . . ¶ Recent photographic acquisitions are on view, including works by Rudy Burckhardt, Hans Bellmer, Jan Groover, Gilles Peress, and Mariana Yampolsky. Through April 11. (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, 11 to 6; Thursdays and Fridays, noon to 8:30.)

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—Selections from the permanent collection. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 10 to 6, and Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 8.)

Guggenheim Museum SoHo, 575 Broadway—Fifty-six paintings by Antoni Tàpies, in a retrospective of the Catalan artist's career. Through April 23. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6, and Saturday evenings until 8. . . . ¶ A concurrent show of paintings by Tàpies is at Pace Wildenstein, 142 Greene St.)

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—"Black Male: Representations of Masculinity in Contemporary American Art" aims to take apart those stereotypes of African-American men which have resulted in a set of visual clichés demonizing or marginalizing them. But in spite of the explosive subject, it's a flat, dispiriting, and even visually inert exhibit. It does include several fine works of art, though, such as three realist portraits from the nineteen-seventies by Barkley L. Hendricks of young black men, each in a kind of costume (militant, homeboy, playground jock), against white backgrounds. The dialogue between type and individual is their subject, and they make the show worth seeing. Through March 15. . . . ¶ In "From the Collection: Photography, Sculpture, and Painting," the curators have favored the avant-garde abstractionism of the sixties, mounting impressive installations of stripe paintings by Agnes Martin and metallic sculptures by Donald Judd. A highly personalized, even confessional photography—the ravaged bohemias of Nan Goldin and Mark Morrisroe—sets the tone for the contemporary work. Through Feb. 26. . . . ¶ "Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney: Printmakers' Patron." This modest exhibition—a tribute to the museum's founder—includes many nice pieces by, among others, Stuart Davis, Edward Hopper, Louis Lozowick, and Whitney's gloomy favorite, John Sloan. Paul Cadmus's etching "The Fleet's In!" (1934), based on his painting of the same name, is one of the show's standouts—a woozy celebration of inebriated slatterns and sailors with conspicuous bulges. Through March 12. . . . ¶ "Franz Kline: Black & White, 1950-61." Through March 12. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th St.—The museum has



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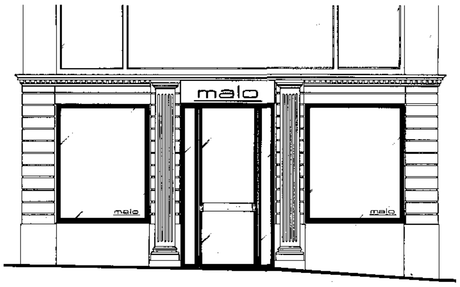

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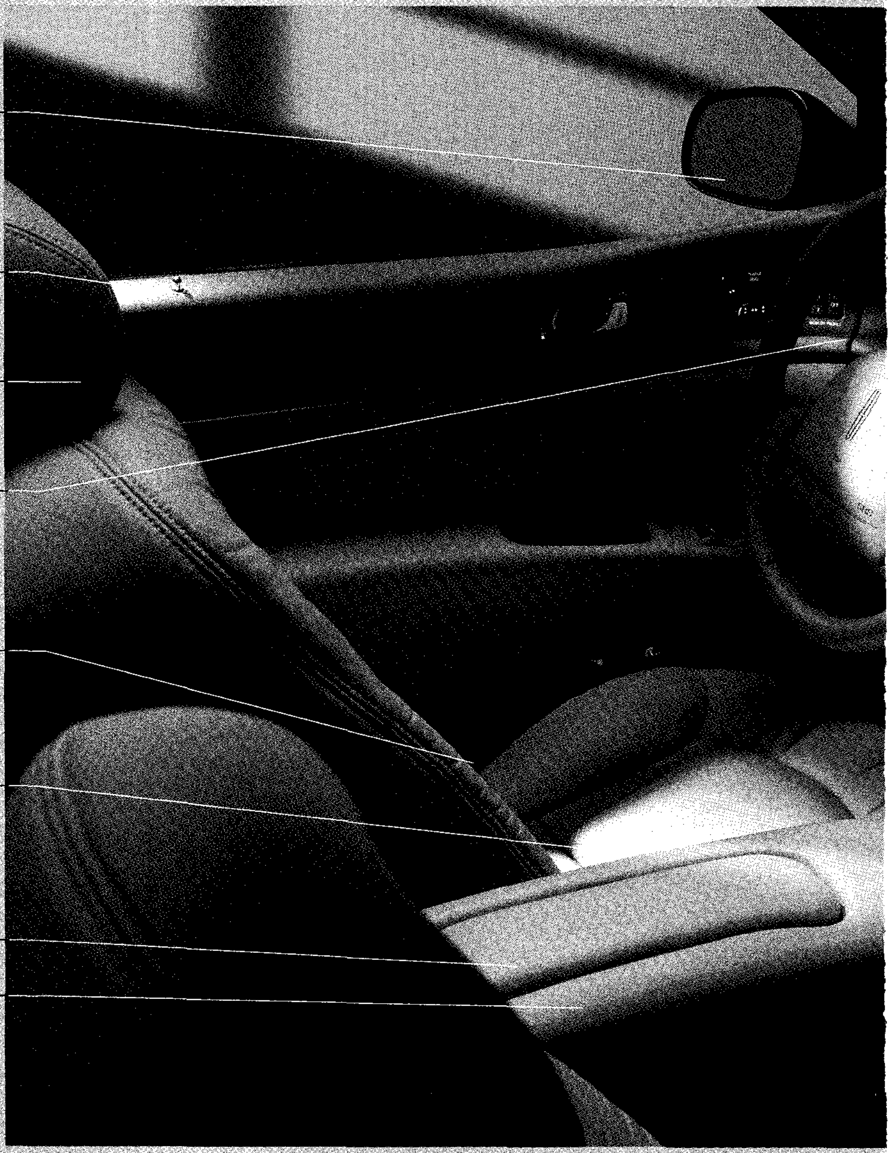

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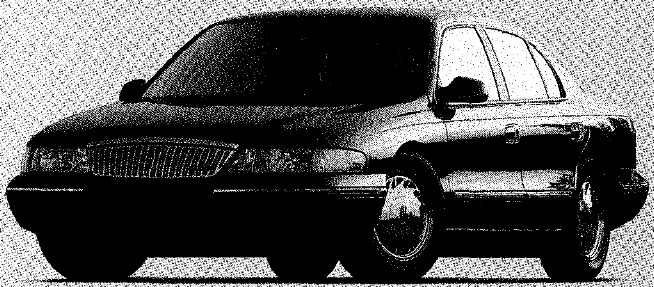

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ART—Cont'd

introduced a new way for visitors to take in many of the exhibits: “Expedition,” a self-guided tour of fifty treasures, including the Giant Sequoia, the Blue Whale, and the Komodo Dragon displays. You set out from the “base camp” with a free guidebook (a children's version is available), or you can rent a CD player with a recorded guide. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway—“Thomas Cole: Landscape into History.” Cole (1801-1848), the English-born founder of the Hudson River school, started out as an ardent Romantic, painting arcadian visions of New World wilderness. In his maturity, pessimism emerged. His masterwork is an allegorical series called “The Course of Empire”—five paintings that prophesy the decline of the American republic under the menacing sway of greed and militarism. Through April 2. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

Bard Graduate Center, 18 W. 86th St.—A selection of nineteenth- and twentieth-century decorative arts from the Sydney and Frances Lewis Collection of the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts. Through Feb. 26. (Tuesdays through Sundays, 11 to 5, and Thursday evenings until 8:30.)

Cooper-Hewitt Museum, Fifth Ave. at 91st St.—Books, catalogues, signs, and stationery, mostly from the fifties and sixties, by the graphic designer Elaine Lustig Cohen. . . . ¶ “Good Offices and Beyond: The Evolution of the Workplace” surveys the development of equipment designed to manage paper, numbers, time, and information. Through March 19. . . . ¶ “The Structure of Style: Dutch Modernism in the Applied Arts 1880-1930.” Selected ceramics, magazine covers, and glassware, among other objects, detail a period of increasing industrialization in Europe. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, noon to 5.)

Morgan Library, 29 E. 36th St.—“In Praise of Aldus Manutius: A Quincentenary Exhibition.” A large group of books from the house of the master printer who introduced roman and italic type and the radical idea of portable printed books. Through April 9. . . . ¶ “The Collector's Eye,” a tribute to the trustee and benefactor Julia Parker Wightman, who died last summer. Culled from the thousands of objects she gave to the library, this display includes a Flemish Book of Hours from 1440, the finest extant copy of Galileo's “Dialogo” (1632), and a group of miniature eighteenth-century children's books. Through April 2. . . . ¶ Several letters from the hand of Frederick Douglass are on view. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 10:30 to 5; Saturdays, 10:30 to 6; Sundays, noon to 6.)

National Museum of the American Indian, 1 Bowling Green—“Creation's Journey: Masterworks of Native American Identity and Belief.” . . . ¶ “All Roads Are Good: Native Voices on Life and Culture.” . . . ¶ “This Path We Travel: Celebrations of Contemporary Native American Creativity.” (Open daily, 10 to 5.)

The New Museum, 583 Broadway—Fifty large-scale photographs by Andres Serrano. Examples from all of his thematic series since 1983—including “Bodily Fluids,” “Ejaculations,” “Immersions” (whence came the notorious “Piss Christ”), “Morgue,” and the new “Gun”—are here. Through April 9. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, and Sundays, noon to 6; Saturdays, noon to 8.)

New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St.—An exhibition on the works of the French fable writer Jean de La Fontaine (1621-95) is in the Solomon Room. Seventeenth-century period music sets the tone for the display of rare books, drawings, scores, and other objects. Through April 15. . . . ¶ “Garbage! The History and Politics of Trash in New York City.” A show that lets you stroll through our fair city's horse-skinning, fat-rendering, and bone-boiling factories, through cattle yards, hog pens, and manure yards. Nineteenth- and twentieth-century photographs, prints, maps, sculptures, and artifacts are on view, serving to bring the streets to your nose. Through Feb. 25. . . . ¶ “e.e. cummings @ 100: An Anniversary Exhibition.” (Open Mondays, and Thursdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6; Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 11 to 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6. The following lists lead off with new shows.)

Agnes Martin—Recent paintings by an artist who didn't reach her mature style until the early sixties, when she was in her late forties. These works are in a new scale (five feet square rather than six feet square), but the familiar horizontal stripes, in new combinations of yellow, pink, blue, and white, are still here. Opens Feb. 17. Through March 18. (Pace Wildenstein, 32 E. 57th St.)

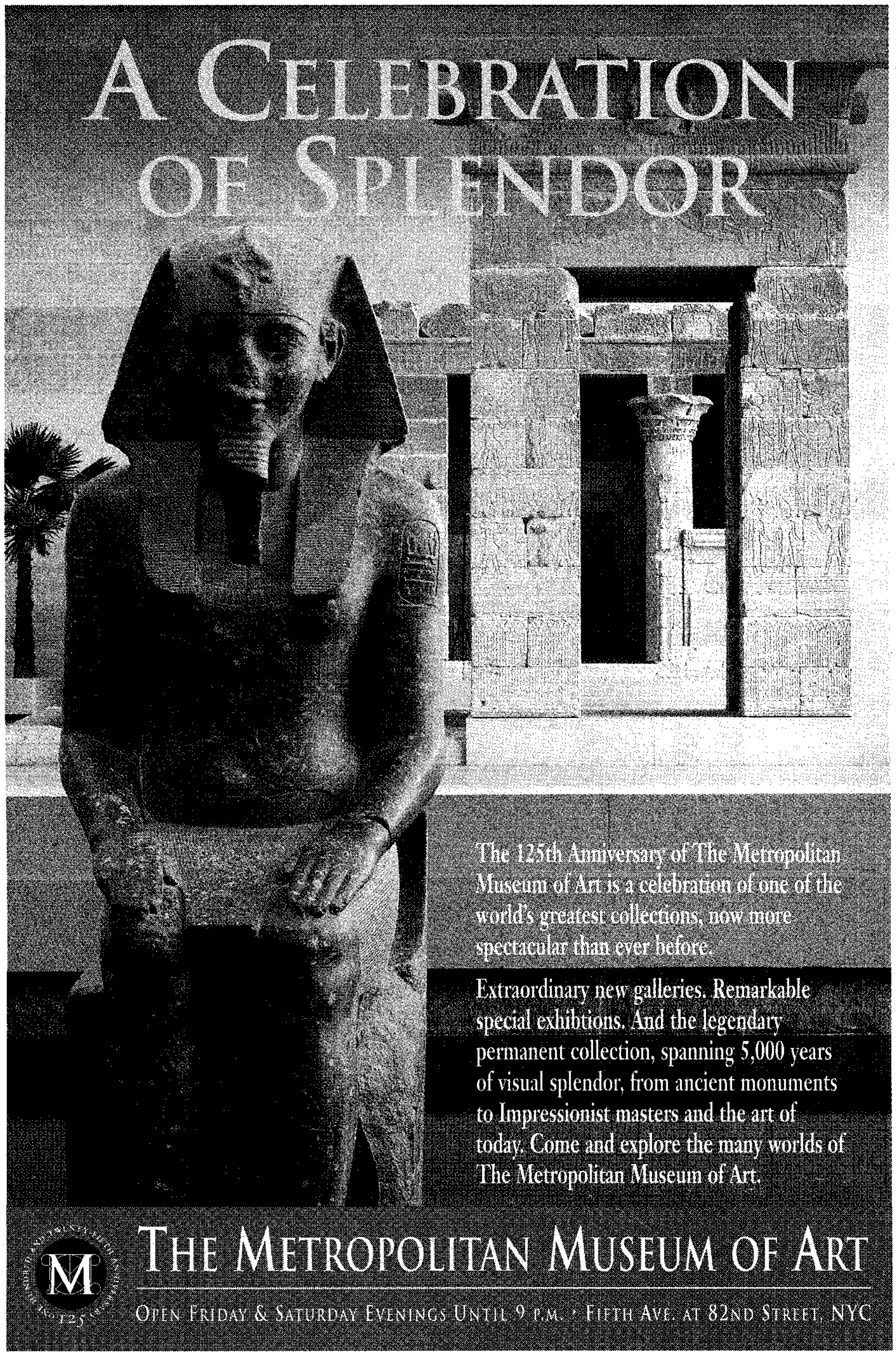
David Smith (1906-65)—Sculptures, paintings, and drawings from the forties, inspired by classical and jazz music. Opens Feb. 15. Through March 25. (Washburn, 20 W. 57th St.)

Christopher Wilmarth (1943-87)—Sculptures in steel, etched glass, and bronze, and several drawings. Opens Feb. 18. Through March 25. (Janis, 110 W. 57th St.)

"Conspiratorial Laughter—A Friendship: Man Ray and Duchamp"—A large display of works by both artists, including “L.H.O.O.Q.,” Duchamp's famous image of a bearded and mustached Mona Lisa, and Man Ray's response, “Le Père de la Giaconde”—a cigar-smoking Leonardo da Vinci. Opens Feb. 15. Through April 8. (Zabriskie, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

•

William Baziotes (1912-63)—Wandering through this show of early and later works, it's hard to shake the impression that the artist was one of the New York School's lesser lights. His “Portrait of Ethel Baziotes” (1940) couldn't have pleased the sitter much,



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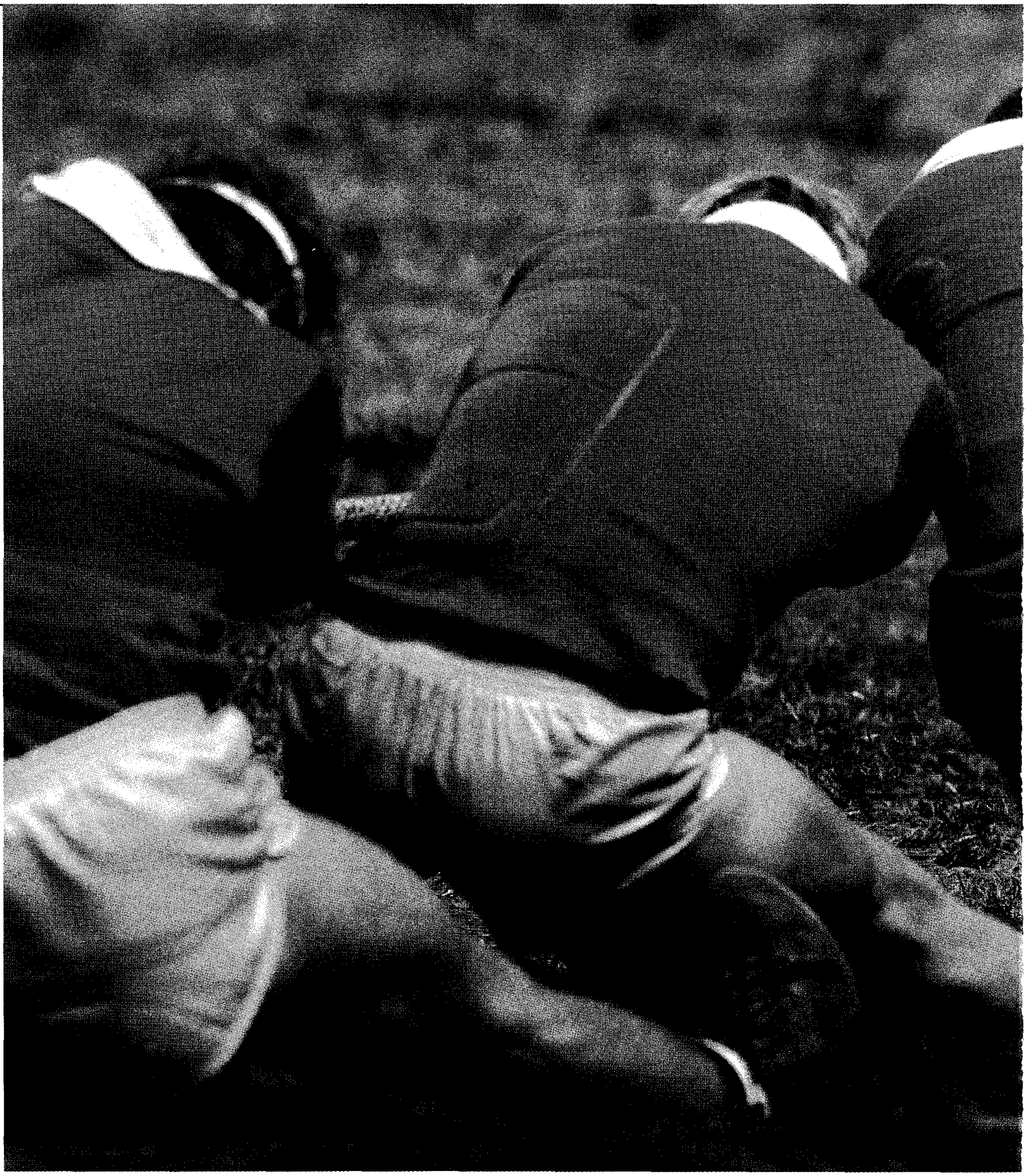

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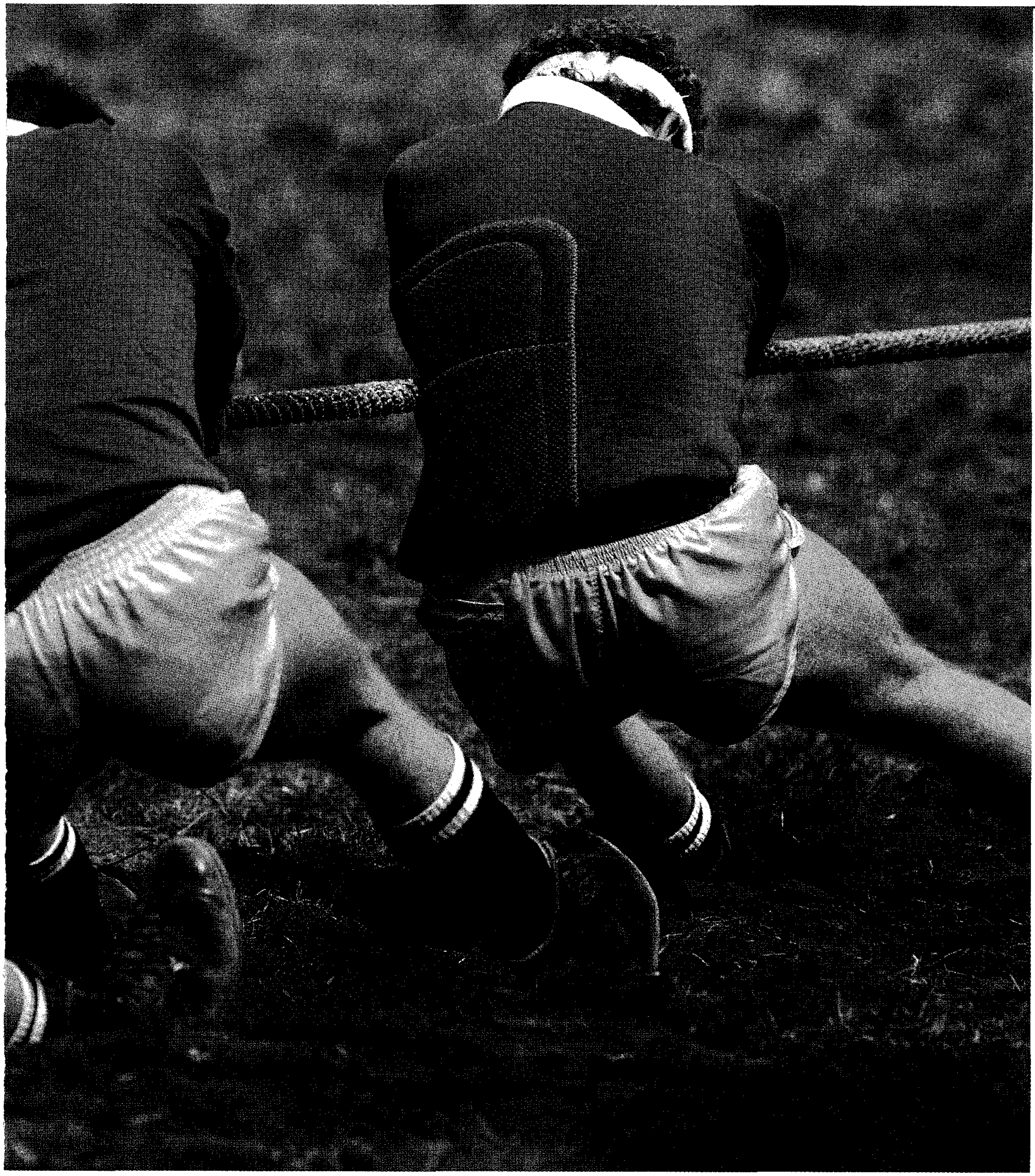

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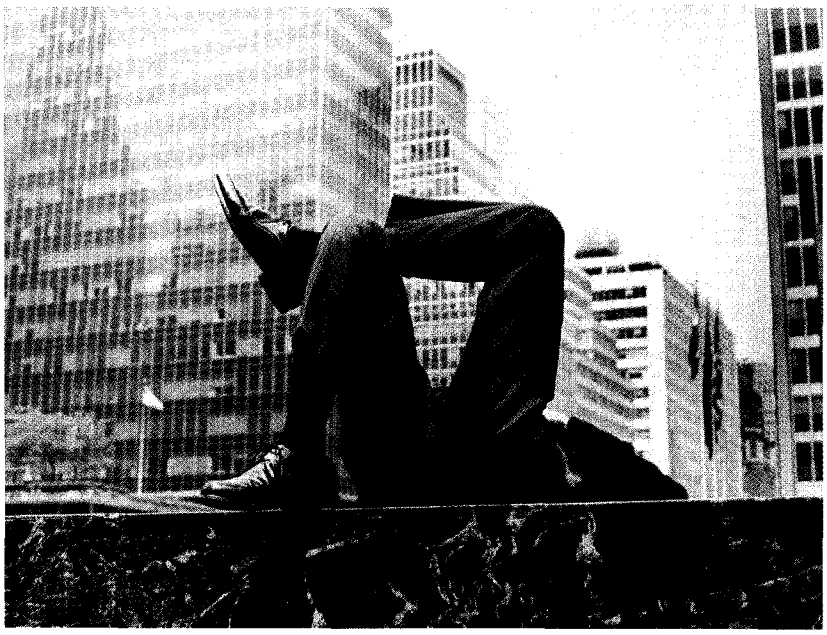
75th Anniversary

ART–Cont'd

and the mature paintings are afflicted by a goofiness that belies their spooky or grandiose titles. The most engaging works are also some of the earliest: cartoonish watercolors that look back to Miró's biomorphism and forward to—"Sesame Street"? Through March 4. (Blum Helman, 20 W. 57th St.)

Christian Boltanski—Two installations incorporating eleven hundred small archival photographs, found snapshots, and bed linens. Through March 11. (Marian Goodman, 24 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)



Walker Evans' view of Lever House, in "Landmarks of New York."

Roni Horn / Nayland Blake—Watercolors of literary quotations and references on dense black backgrounds. / Two "video objects," in which small groups of video equipment playing tape loops function as sculpture, along with a pair of straightforward video works. Through March 11. (Marks, 1018 Madison Ave., at 79th St.)

R. B. Kitaj—New oils and drawings by the Cleveland-born painter, who has lived in London since 1958. (The show coincides with a retrospective at the Metropolitan Museum that starts Feb. 17.) Through March 4. (Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Philip Pearlstein—Huge new paintings of nude figures in interior settings. Through March 4. (Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St.)

Fairfield Porter (1907-75)—Thirty-three watercolor portraits, interiors, and Maine and Hamptons landscapes, in the artist's familiar, easygoing representational style. Through March 4. (Hirschl & Adler Modern, 21 E. 70th St.)

Charles Sarka (1879-1960)—Small travel landscapes and figure studies in graphite, colored pencil, and watercolor, by an illustrator for *Collier's* and *Harper's*. Through March 4. (Davis & Langdale, 231 E. 60th St.)

Tom Uttech—Paintings of dramatic forest vistas inspired by the artist's regular trips to Quetico Provincial Park, in Ontario. Through Feb. 25. (Schmidt Bingham, 41 E. 57th St.)

Don Van Vliet—Thickly impastoed paintings in strong colors on white backgrounds, by the man once known as Captain Beefheart. Through March 18. (Werner, 21 E. 67th St.)

"California in the 60s"—Sculptures and paintings produced by artists of the Bay Area Funk scene, including Robert Arneson, Manuel Neri, Robert Hudson, Joan Brown, Peter Saul, William Wiley, and Roy DeForest. Through Feb. 28. (Frumkin-Adams, 50 W. 57th St.)

"Seven from the Seventies"—Abstract paintings and drawings by Diebenkorn, Frankenthaler, Krasner, Martin, Mitchell, Scully, and Stella. Through March 4. (Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St.)

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

Tom Otterness—New sculptures in aluminum, bronze, or steel, of a thumb, a hand, a foot, an eye, and other body parts. Also on view are ink-on-paper studies and more finished renderings in graphite and watercolor. Opens Feb. 18. Through March 25. (Brooke Alexander, 59 Wooster St.)

David Reed—A show of abstract paintings with a twist. One room in the gallery will be remade in the image of James Stewart's bedroom in Hitchcock's "Vertigo"; above the bed will hang one of the artist's new paintings (the others will be in an adjacent room). Next to the bed, a videotape loop from the movie will feature the same painting digitally inserted above the bed. Whoa. Opens Feb. 18. Through March 19. (Protetch, 560 Broadway.)

Ray Smith—"Portraits of American Writers," a group of new paintings on wood and canvas. Opens Feb. 18. Through March 18. (Sperone Westwater, 142 Greene St.)

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Donald Judd (1928-94)—Sculptures made between 1963 and 1990. Through Feb. 25. (Cooper, 155 Wooster St.)

Richard Long / Alighiero e Boetti (1940-94)—"Somerset Willow Line" (1980), an arrangement of six hundred and eight willow branches, by the peripatetic British artist. / "The Thousand Longest Rivers in the World" (1976-78) is a nine-by-fifteen-foot canvas work in which the names and lengths of the rivers are embroidered in white silk on a field of different shades of green. Through April 29. (Blum, 99 Wooster St.)

Dan Peterman / Josiah McElheny—The floor of the gallery is the site of "Ground Cover (1.725 tons)," twenty-three pallets of reprocessed plastic that the artist—in a rare combination of utopianism, practicality, and aesthetics—has re-formed into green-and-gray speckled tiles. Each pallet has a hundred and twenty-six pieces, covers fifty-two and a half square feet, and is equal to the annual per-capita consumption of plastic in the United States. / A collection of six pseudo-historical works by a dedicated glassblower, who has created such impossibly whimsical objects as a rose inside a bottle and provided fake certificates with detailed histories. The falsification is reminiscent of the works of Komar and Melamid; the glassblowing is unique, if a bit sentimental. Through Feb. 25. (Rosen, 130 Prince St.)

Peggy Preheim—Spooky images of babies, in many mediums: an Ingres-like pencil drawing of a mutilated infant, a side chair with the image of a tot in a starched white bib painted on its oval back, porcelain sculptures that look like Victorian dolls from hell. Not nice. Through March 4. (Golden, 39 Wooster St.)

Elsa Rady / Tristano di Robilant—New wall works in which groups of porcelain forms are bolted to aluminum shelves. / Large-scale geometric plaster sculptures. Through March 11. (Holly Solomon, 172 Mercer St.)

Antoni Tàpies—A show of recent works by the Catalan painter, which coincides with a retrospective at the Guggenheim SoHo. Through March 4. (Pace Wildenstein, 142 Greene St.)

Bill Traylor (1854-1947)—Works in poster paint and pencil on cardboard, by a self-taught artist who did not start painting until his eighties. Through Feb. 25. (Ricco/Maresca, 152 Wooster St.)

Dario Urzay—By suspending brilliant cosmetic pigments in acrylic resin, this visionary Spanish artist creates enamel-like surfaces of rare luminosity. The images have a weird, pulsating presence. Through Feb. 25. (Auchincloss, 558 Broadway.)

David Wojnarowicz (1954-92)—Paintings, works on paper, photographs, and photocollages. Through Feb. 28. (Bromm, 90 West Broadway.)

"Folk Erotica"—A show of close to a hundred objects, ranging from naïve (if that's the word) paintings and sculptures to naughty weather vanes, lamps, and bottle openers, in which self-taught American artists explore the one subject we're all amateurs in, no matter how much practice we've had. The highlight is a nineteenth-century toy, a wooden Uncle Sam that does unspeakable things to a wooden lady. Through Feb. 25. (American Primitive Gallery, 594 Broadway.)

Group Show—Works by such blue-chip artists as Louise Bourgeois, Julian Schnabel, Richard Serra, Francesco Clemente, and Philip Taaffe, in a benefit exhibition for Tibet House New York. Through March 4. (Gagosian, 136 Wooster St.)

OTHER VENUES

"Common Ground/Uncommon Vision"—A broad selection of American folk art from the Michael and Julie Hall Collection, including paintings, sculptures, drawings, and religious carvings, along with toys, walking sticks, and other functional objects. Through April 14. (PaineWebber Building, Sixth Ave. at 52nd St. Open Mondays through Fridays, 8 to 6.)

AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES

(Auction houses display their wares several days before most sales and welcome the merely curious along with the potential bidder. Call the numbers listed for viewing schedules.)

Sotheby's—The sale of clocks and watches from the Joseph M. Meraux collection concludes on Feb. 15; on Feb. 16, an auction of nineteenth-century paintings, drawings, and sculptures, including notable works by Tissot and Alma-Tadema. Highlights from a much anticipated sale of art works from the estate of Man Ray (to be held at Sotheby's London, on March 22-23) will be on display in New York on Feb. 23-25. . . . ¶ Sotheby's Arcade auctions usually offer opportunities for collectors on a budget. Almost nothing exceeds ten thousand dollars, and most items carry estimates closer to a thousand. Arcade sales are scheduled for three days this month: furniture and decorations (on Feb. 22-23) and modern and contemporary paintings (on Feb. 24). (York Ave. at 72nd St. 606-7000.)

Historic Photography Fair—Metropolitan Antiques, 110 W. 19th St. 463-0200. Feb. 17-19.

Triple Pier—The winter marathon for devout antiquers: two weekends, each with six hundred dealers, and with a complete turnover of stock for the second go-around. Comfortable shoes required. (Piers 88, 90, and 92, Twelfth Ave. between 48th and 52nd Sts. Feb. 18-19 and Feb. 25-26. For information, call 685-4641.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

Gregory Crewdson—Color photographs of birds, squirrels, butterflies, and more, in elaborately detailed large-scale dioramas. Opens Feb. 18. Through March 25. (Luhring Augustine, 130 Prince St.)

Richard Misrach—Selections from the "Salt Flats" series and from a new series focussing on clouds. Opens Feb. 16. Through March 18. (Marcus, 578 Broadway.)

Sebastiao Salgado—A collection of two hundred and fifty photographs, titled "Workers: an Archaeology of the Industrial Age." Opens Feb. 17. Through May 26. (International Center of Photography Midtown, Sixth Ave. at 43rd St. Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

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Debbie Fleming Caffery—Recent black-and-white photographs taken in Mexico. Through Feb. 25. (Greenberg, 120 Wooster St.)

Arno Fischer / "White"—Documentary-style photos of West and East Berlin, made in the fifties. / A group show that presents many gradations of the word's meaning, in works by Friedlander, Eggleston, Hosoe, Levinthal, Frank, Sugimoto, and others. Through Feb. 25. (Laurence Miller, 138 Spring St.)

Aharon Gluska—Enlarged photos of prisoners at Auschwitz, which have been painted over with clear acrylic and partially obscured by areas of black paint. Through March 4. (Mann, 42 E. 76th St.)

Nan Goldin—The artist's "Ballad of Sexual Dependency," a forty-five-minute color-slide-with-soundtrack presentation, will be screened three times a day, at 1, 3, and 5. Also on view are new medium-format pictures taken in Tokyo, Berlin, Salzburg, and New York, and twelve large-scale works. Through April 16. (Marks, 522 W. 22nd St. Open Thursdays through Sundays, noon to 6.)

William Klein—"In and Out of Fashion" is a suggestive exhibit rather than a sweeping, satisfying overview. But there's so much going on in Klein's best work that even a show restricted to a single aspect of it gives you a sense of his versatility. Through Feb. 26. (International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

Danny Lyon—A large-scale exhibition representing many phases of a diverse career, from photographs of the civil-rights movement to Lyon's trademark shots of bikers, hot-rodders, and hippies to intimate photomontages of his family. The most powerful images are those done in Texas prisons in 1967-68. Through April 8. (Lowinsky, 578 Broadway.)

László Moholy-Nagy (1895-1946)—Photograms, montages, and straight (although not straight-perspective) photographs by the protean Constructivist. Through March 11. (Houk Friedman, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St.)

Ray Mortenson—Photographs of lakes and ponds in the Hudson Highlands. Through March 4. (Borden, 560 Broadway.)

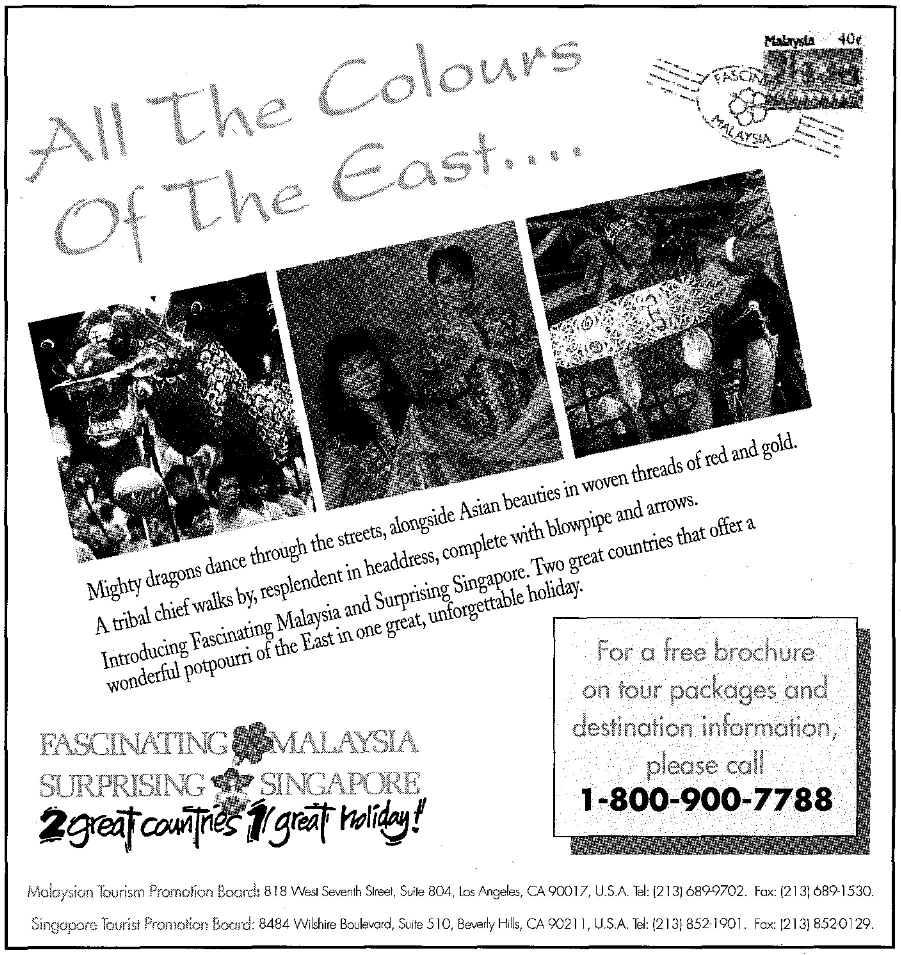
David Seidner—Classically posed nudes against black backgrounds. Through March 4. (Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St.)

Leni Sonnenfeld—A selection of the photojournalist's images of Jewish life in the twentieth century. Through Feb. 28. (Yeshiva University Museum, Amsterdam Ave. at 185th St. Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, 10:30 to 5; Sundays, noon to 6.)

Robert Yarber—Nocturnal landscape views of cemeteries, casinos, quick stops, and factories, all just as eerily lit as the artist's paintings. Through March 11. (Sonnabend, 420 West Broadway.)

"Landmarks of New York"—Views of the city by Abbott, Coburn, Evans, Hine, Hofer, Kertész, Meyerowitz, and Ruzicka, among others. Through March 24. (Seagram Building, 375 Park Ave., at 52nd St., fourth floor. Open Mondays; closed Saturdays.)

(See the museum listings for photography exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art and the New Museum.)



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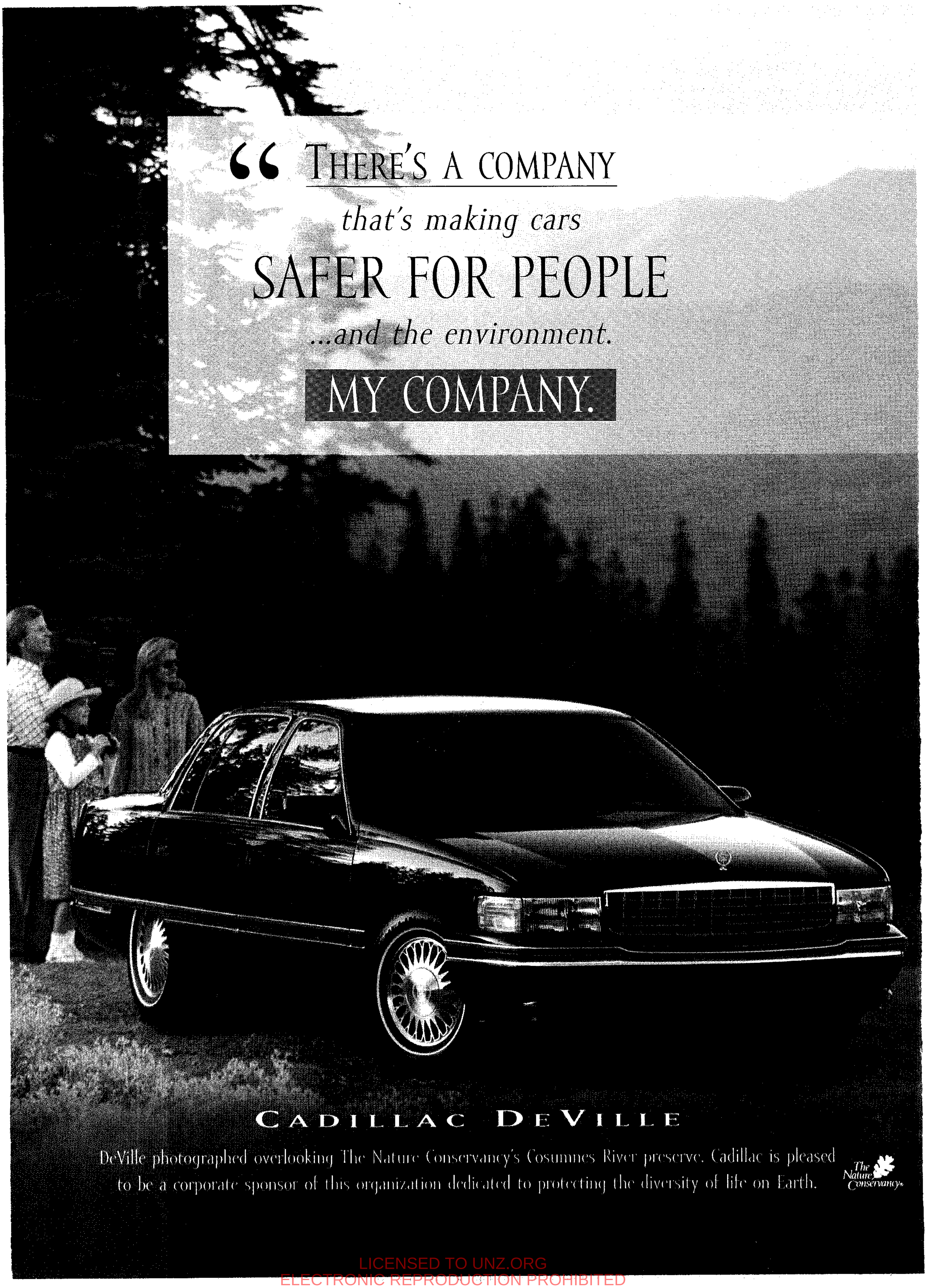

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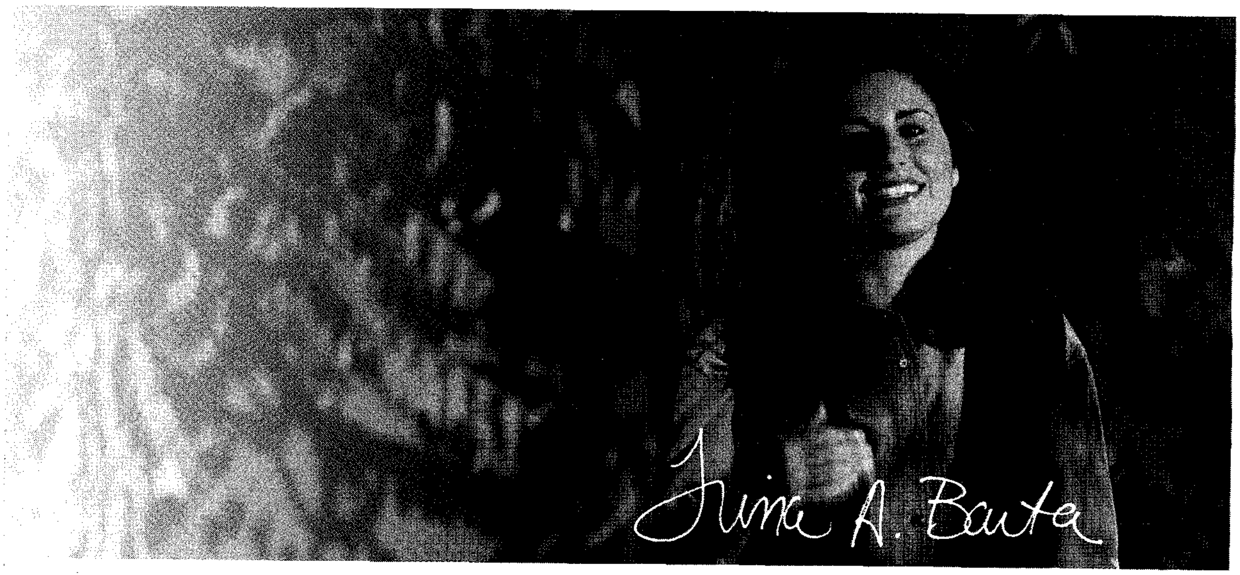

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CLASSICAL MUSIC

... À Son Goût

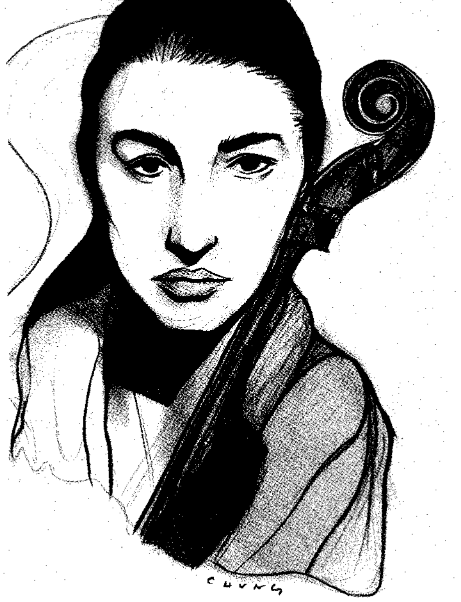
Lucky is the pianist with a natural affinity for the superstar repertoire—the Germanic and Slavic classics that provide opportunities to display brain and brawn, respectively (and sometimes both at once). Pianists whose passions veer toward other music are likely to miss the entrance to fame's superhighway, but they, too, can consider themselves fortunate, since stardom is the least of music's rewards.

The American Grant Johannesen is one of the latter. Though his fingers touch down impressively throughout the repertoire, they make their happiest impact when the music is French. On February 18, at Carnegie Hall, he'll celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of his New York-début recital with some mainstream Beethoven and Schubert, but the highlights of the evening promise to be three Gallic masterworks—Franck's "Prélude, Choral et Fugue," Fauré's Ballade (in its original solo version), and Ravel's playful "Five O'Clock Fox-trot Fantasy" (transcribed from his opera "L'Enfant et les Sortilèges"). Fauré, whose hundred-and-fiftieth birthday happens to fall this year, is a specialty; Johannesen was the first to record all of the composer's elegant piano music. Even if the pianist hasn't been a superstar, his past half century has been packed with rich experiences. Some of these—including a chummy correspondence with Milhaud, a joint portrait with Poulenc, and an adulatory commendation from the French government—are documented in the exhibit space of the Steinway showrooms (at 109 West 57th Street, 246-1100; through March 31). The show gives pianophiles (and Francophiles) a visual adjunct to Johannesen's concert down the block.

(The box-office number for the Metropolitan Opera House is 362-6000; for Alice Tully Hall, 875-5050; for Avery Fisher Hall, 875-5030; for Carnegie Hall and Weill Recital Hall, 247-7800; for Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St., 362-8719; for the Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St., 864-7799; for the 92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St., 996-1100; and for the Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level, 875-5050.)

OPERA

Metropolitan Opera—**TURANDOT,** with Gwyneth Jones, Teresa Stratas, Lando Bartolini, and Paul Plishka; conducted by Nello Santi. (Feb. 15 and Feb. 18 at 8.) . . . With Ghena Dimitrova, Ms. Stratas, Vladimir Popov, and Mr. Plishka; Mr. Santi. (Feb. 20 at 8.) . . . With Ms. Dimitrova, Ms. Stratas, Mr. Popov, and Hao Jiang Tian; Mr. Santi. (Feb. 23 at 8.) . . . With Ms. Dimitrova, Maria Spacagna, Mr. Popov, and Mr. Tian; Mr. Santi. (Feb. 27 at 8.) . . . **CAVALLERIA RUSTICANA** (with Maria Guleghina, Kristján Jóhannsson, and Bruno Pola) and **PAGLIACCI** (with Daniela Dessì, Nicola Martinucci, Sherrill Milnes, and Dwayne Croft); Christian Badea conducting both. (Feb. 16 at 8.) . . . **LA TRAVIATA,** with Veronica Villarroel, Frank Lopardo, and Roberto Frontali; John Fiore. (Feb. 17 and Feb. 22 at 8, and Feb. 25 at 1:30.) . . . **IL BARBIERE DI SIVIGLIA,** with Jennifer Larmore, Stanford Olsen, Thomas Allen, Enzo Dara, and Nicolai Ghiaurov; David Atherton. (Feb. 18 at 1:30.) . . . **SIMON BOCCANEGRA,** with Aprile Millo, Franco Farina, Vladimir Chernov, and Robert Lloyd; James Levine. (Feb. 21 and Feb. 25 at 8.) . . . With Roberto Scandiuzzi instead of Mr. Lloyd. (Feb. 28 at 8.) . . . **DER ROSENKAVALIER,** with Mechthild Gessendorf, Susan Graham, Heidi Grant Murphy, Stanford Olsen, Gottfried Hornik, and Franz Hawlata; Mr. Levine. (Feb. 24 at 7:30.) (Metropolitan Opera House.)



Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg, with the New York Philharmonic.

Wagner on Wall Street—A semi-staged condensation of Act I of "Die Walküre," with Janet Bookspan providing a narration to keep the plot clear. (St. Paul's Chapel, Broadway at Fulton St. Feb. 16 at noon. Admission by contribution. . . . ¶ Trinity Church, Broadway at Wall St. Feb. 21 at 1. Admission by contribution.)

Kirov Opera of St. Petersburg—The opening performance of the company's production of Rimsky-Korsakov's "The Legend of the Invisible City of Kitezh." Valery Gergiev conducts. Performed in Russian, with English supertitles. (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 1-718 636-4100. Feb. 28 at 7. Through March 5.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

New York Philharmonic—At Avery Fisher Hall. Feb. 16, Feb. 18, and Feb. 21 at 8, and Feb. 17 at 2: Daniele Gatti conducts Mendelssohn's "Ruy Blas" Overture, Barber's Violin Concerto (with Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg), and Prokofiev's Symphony No. 3. . . . ¶ Feb. 23 and Feb. 25 at 8; Feb. 24 at 11 A.M.; and Feb. 28 at 7:30: Neeme Järvi conducts Eduard Tubin's Symphony No. 5, Grieg's Piano Concerto (with Awadagin Pratt), and Tchaikovsky's Overture-Fantasy "Romeo and Juliet."

Boston Symphony—Seiji Ozawa conducts Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 5 (the "Emperor," with Dubravka Tomsic) and Strauss's "Ein Heldenleben." (Carnegie Hall. Feb. 15-16 at 8.)

Juilliard Orchestra—Performing Respighi's "The Fountains of Rome," Hindemith's 1940 Cello Concerto (featuring Brent Samuel), and Beethoven's Symphony No. 6. Otto-Werner Mueller conducts. (Alice Tully Hall. Feb. 17 at 8. For information about free tickets, which are required, call 769-7406.)

Handel and Haydn Society of Boston—Christopher Hogwood conducts music by Bach (his "Brandenburg" Concerto No. 4 and G-Minor Missa Brevis) and Handel (his "Dixit Dominus" and a recently discovered orchestral sonata). (Avery Fisher Hall. Feb. 17 at 8.)

New York Chamber Symphony—Violinist Shlomo Mintz leads the orchestra in Bach's "Brandenburg" Concerto No. 3, Dvořák's Serenade, and three concertos by Vivaldi (in which he doubles as soloist). (92nd Street Y. Feb. 18 at 8 and Feb. 19 at 3.)

City Island Baroque Ensemble—Ilan Rechtman is the soloist in Bach's Harpsichord Concertos in D Minor, E Major, and A Minor. (Le Refuge Inn, 620 City Island Ave., City Island, the Bronx. 1-718 885-2478. Feb. 19 at noon.)

New York Youth Symphony—Miguel Harth-Bedoya conducts the première of Michael Ellison's "A Cry in the Wilderness," Ravel's Concerto for Piano Left-Hand (featuring Gary Graffman), and Dvořák's Symphony No. 8. (Carnegie Hall. Feb. 19 at 3.)

Freiburg Baroque Orchestra—The conductorless period-instrument orchestra performs a suite from Purcell's "Dido and Aeneas" and concerti grossi by Handel (in G Minor, Op. 6, No. 6), Bach (his "Brandenburg" Concerto No. 5), and the Bolognese violinist-and-composer Lorenzo Gaetano Zavateri (his "Concerto Teatrale," published in 1735). (Kaye Playhouse, Hunter College, Park Ave. at 68th St. 772-4448. Feb. 20 at 8.)

Manhattan School of Music Goes Modern—The school's annual festival of twentieth-century music, in the Borden Auditorium. Feb. 20 at 8: Vocal and instrumental chamber works by Shulamit Ran, Karl Kohn, Tan Dun (his "Circle with Four Trios, Conductor, and Audience"), Gregg Wramage (a première), and Berio. . . . ¶ Feb. 24 at 8: Lawrence Leighton Smith conducts the Manhattan School of Music Philharmonia in Ursula Mamlok's "Constellations," Paul Creston's Concertino for Marimba (featuring Glen Wilkovsky), Robert Spillman's Concerto for Bass Trombone (with Robert Fournier), and Ezra Laderman's "Sanctuary." (Broadway at 122nd St. No tickets necessary.)

Ascension Music Chorus—Dennis Keene directs choral music by New York composers, including Copland, Gershwin, and Bernstein. (Church of the Ascension, Fifth Ave. at 10th St. 254-8553. Feb. 21 at 8.)

Royal Philharmonic Orchestra—At Avery Fisher Hall, Yuri Temirkanov conducting. Feb. 24 at 8: Elgar's "Cockaigne" Overture, Prokofiev's Violin Concerto No. 2 (with Boris Belkin), and Shostakovich's Symphony No. 5. . . . ¶ Feb. 26 at 3: Britten's "Four Sea Interludes" from "Peter Grimes," Prokofiev's Piano Concerto No. 3 (with Eliso Virsaladze), and Stravinsky's "Petrushka."

Orpheus Chamber Orchestra—The conductorless ensemble performs Fauré's "Masques et Bergamasques," Carter's Symphony No. 1, and Vivaldi's "The Four Seasons" (with violinist Gil Shaham). (Carnegie Hall. Feb. 25 at 8.)

Met Orchestra—The ensemble moves out of the pit and onto center stage, as James Levine conducts Dvořák's F-Minor Romance for Violin (featuring the orchestra's concertmaster, Raymond Gniewek), Gunther Schuller's "Of Reminiscences and Reflections," and Mahler's "Das Lied von der Erde" (with tenor Ben Heppner and baritone Thomas Hampson). (Carnegie Hall. Feb. 26 at 3.)

Musica Sacra—A wide-ranging program of choral works, directed by Richard Westenburg and numerous colleagues. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. Feb. 28 at 8.)

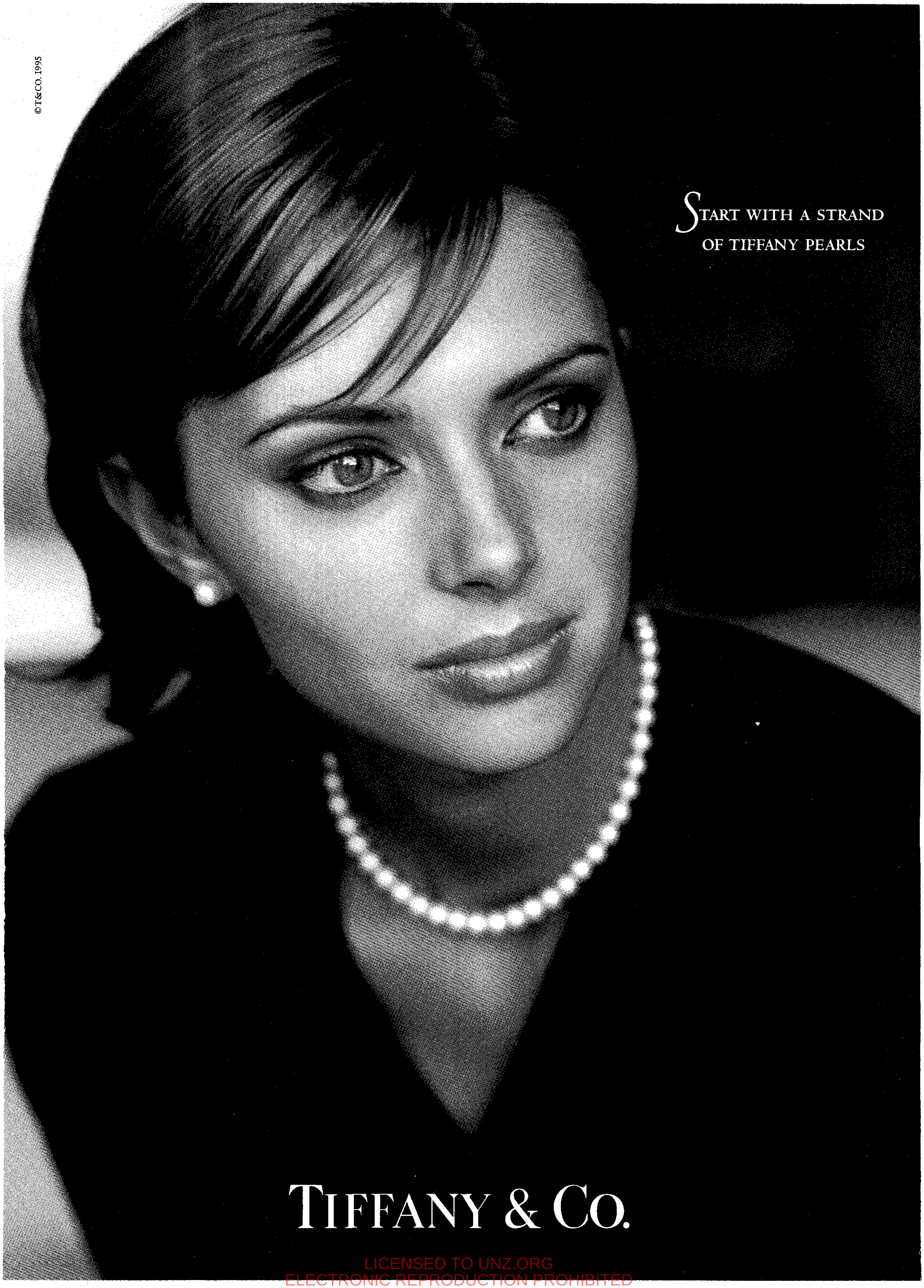
RECITALS

Guarneri Quartet—Performing Arriaga's Quartet No. 2, Mendelssohn's Quartet in E-Flat Major (Op. 44, No. 3), and Schumann's Piano Quintet (with Anton Kuerti). (Alice Tully Hall. Feb. 15 at 8.)

Cecile Licad—The pianist performs Haydn's C-Major Sonata (No. 48), Mozart's C-Minor Fantasy and Sonata (K. 475/457), and Ravel's "Gaspard de la Nuit." (92nd Street Y. Feb. 15 at 8.)

Gerard Reuter—Oboist, with pianist Richard Rodney Bennett, performing sonatas by

Y. DAVID CHUNG


START WITH A STRAND
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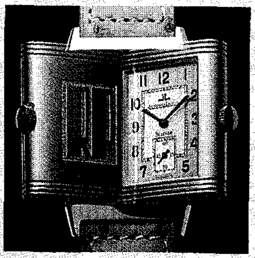
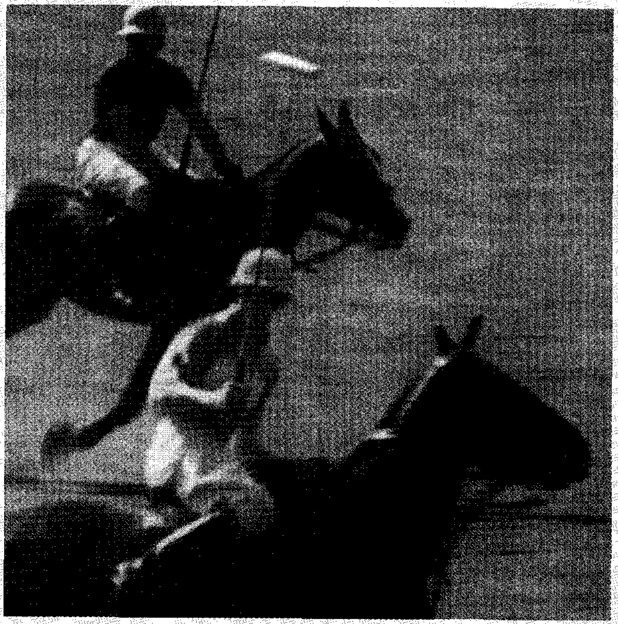
REVERSO:
THE TURNING POINT IN TIME.

BRITISH INDIA, 1930. CÉSAR DE TREY, TRAVELLING SWISS WATCH AGENT, IS ENJOYING SUNDOWNERS AT A SPORTS CLUB AND LISTENING TO YET ANOTHER POLOPLAYER LAMENT HIS SMASHED WRISTWATCH.



JAEGER-LECOULTRE'S CRAFTSMEN CAN ENGRAVE A PERSONAL MOTIF – MONOGRAM OR COAT-OF-ARMS – ON THE WATCH ONLY YOU CAN WEAR.



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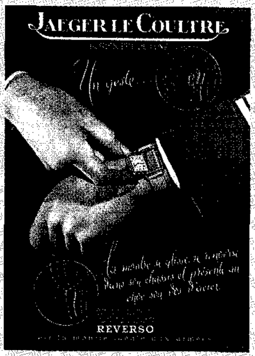

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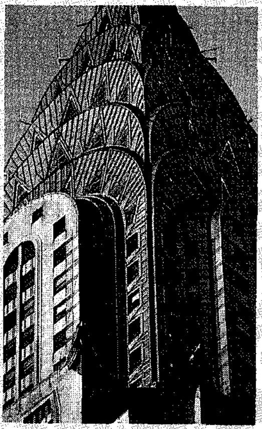

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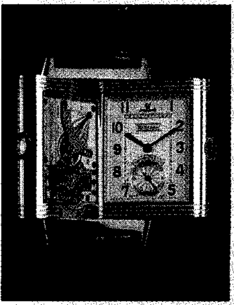

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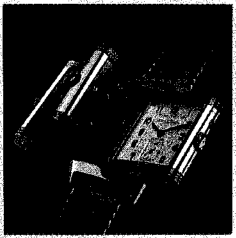

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Telemann, Poulenc, and Dutilleux, as well as Benjamin Godard's "Scotch Scenes," "Three Sondheim Waltzes" (as arranged by Mr. Bennett), and Mr. Bennett's own "After Syrinx I." (Weill Recital Hall. Feb. 15 at 8.)

Robert Glasgow—Playing a set of organ Noëls by Jean-François Dandrieu, two sonatas by Domenico Scarlatti, Bach's C-Minor Fantasie, and works by Schumann, Handel, Franck, Widor, and Vierne. (Church of the Holy Trinity, 316 E. 88th St. Feb. 15 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

Bargemusic—Chamber music on the briny. Feb. 16 at 7:30 and Feb. 19 at 4: Violinist Nai-Yuan Hu and pianist Anne-Marie McDermott perform Prokofiev's F-Minor Violin Sonata; cellist Christopher Costanza joins them for Beethoven's "Kakadu" Variations and Schumann's F-Major Piano Trio. . . . ¶ Feb. 23 at 7:30 and Feb. 26 at 4: Presenting piano quintets by Dohnányi and Franck, as well as a two-violin sonata by Jean-Marie Leclair. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 1-718 624-4061.)

Mendelssohn String Quartet—Feb. 17 at 7: Offering a performance (with commentary) of Mozart's D-Major Flute Quartet, with Eugenia Zukerman. (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949.) . . . ¶ Feb. 21 at 8: Performing Dvořák's "Cypresses" as well as autobiographical works by Janáček (his Quartet No. 2, "Intimate Letters") and Smetana (his Quartet No. 1, "From My Life"). (Merkin Concert Hall.)

Brent Wissick—Viola da gambist, performing a concert of French Baroque musical portraits, including musical depictions of Antoine Forqueray by Couperin and Rameau (plus a Rameau portrait by Forqueray), a self-portrait by Rameau, and *tombeaux* memorializing Lully (by Marais and Jean-Féry Rebel). Other programmatic works round out the evening. Members of Concert Royal assist. (Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. 355-6160. Feb. 17 at 8.)

Kronos String Quartet—Concluding its weeklong engagement at the Brooklyn Academy of Music's Majestic Theatre. Feb. 17 at 8: Dmitri Yanov-Yanovsky's "Chang Music V," Jihad Racy's "Zaman Suite," Scott Johnson's "Cold War Suite," and the première of Tan Dun's "Ghost Opera." . . . ¶ Feb. 18 at 8: Works by John Adams, Don Byron (his "There Goes the Neighborhood"), Brent Michael Davids, Louis Harden, Ingram Marshall, and Carter (his "Fragment"). (651 Fulton St. 1-718 636-4100.)

Grant Johannesen—The pianist performs Beethoven's Sonata in F-Sharp Minor (Op. 78), Schubert's Sonata in B-Flat Major (D. 960), Franck's "Prélude, Choral et Fugue," Fauré's "Ballade" (Op. 19), and Ravel's "Five O'Clock Fox-trot Fantasy" (a transcription by Henri Gil-Marchex from the opera "L'Enfant et les Sortilèges"). (Carnegie Hall. Feb. 18 at 8.)

Grande Bande—Soprano Tamara Crout Matthews and members of the early-music ensemble perform works by Purcell. (St. James Chapel, Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St. Feb. 18 at 8 and Feb. 19 at 3. For information about tickets, call 749-6600.)

Trio Time—Clarinettist Sharon Kam, violinist/violist Scott St. John, and pianist Itamar Golan play trios by Mozart, Bruch, Milhaud, and Bartók (his "Contrasts"). (Walter Reade Theatre. Feb. 19 at 11 A.M. For information about tickets, call 875-5050.)

Ida Haendel—Violinist, performing sonatas by Brahms (his Third), and Enesco (his Third), as well as Bach's D-Minor Chaconne; with pianist Jonathan Feldman. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. Feb. 19 at 2. For information about tickets, call 586-4680.)

Judith Christin—Mezzo-soprano, with pianist Craig Rutenberg and other colleagues, in a program that includes Bolcom's "Cabaret Songs," Schumann's "Frauenliebe und Leben," and a set of songs by Richard Hundley. (Weill Recital Hall. Feb. 19 at 2.)

James Galway—The flutist plays sonatas by Bach and Handel, with harpsichordist Phillip

Moll and viola da gambist Sarah Cunningham. (Avery Fisher Hall. Feb. 19 at 3.)

BachWorks—Presenting solo and chamber music from Bach's pre-Leipzig years, played on period instruments by violinist Lisa Rautenberg, harpsichordist Bradley Brookshire, and organist Richard Erickson. (St. Paul's German Evangelical Lutheran Church, 315 W. 22nd St. Feb. 19 at 5. Tickets at the door on the afternoon of the concert.)

Salon Soirées—Chamber music in a second-floor music room. Feb. 19 at 6 and 8: Alexis Gerlach plays Rachmaninoff's Cello Sonata, with pianist Ilan Rechtman. . . . ¶ Feb. 26 at 6 and 8: Violinist Ya'akov Rubinstein and pianist Mariko Kaneda perform works by Bartók, Chausson, and Gershwin. (Hotel Wales, Madison Ave. at 92nd St. No tickets necessary.)

Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center—Feb. 20 at 8: Presenting contemporary works by Carter, Oskar Morawetz, Edgar Meyer, Sofia Gubaidulina, and Butch Lacy. (Walter Reade Theatre. For information about tickets, call 875-5050.) . . . ¶ Feb. 24 at 8 and Feb. 26 at 5: Performing Jan Dismas Zelenka's Capriccio No. 3 (for oboes, horns, bassoon, and strings), Hindemith's Octet for Winds and Strings, and Brahms' G-Minor Piano Quartet. (Alice Tully Hall.)

Ralf Gothoni—This Finn's previous New York appearances have been as a collaborative pianist for concerts that spotlighted such singers as soprano Barbara Hendricks and the late bass Martti Talvela. His European career has been more prominent, and in 1994 his inquiring, well-rounded musicianship earned him the prestigious Gilmore Artist award. In his New York solo-recital début, Gothoni will perform one small work—an "aria" by Domenico Zipoli—and two very large ones: Liszt's B-Minor Sonata and Schubert's Sonata in B-Flat Major (D. 960). (Miller Theatre. Feb. 21 at 8.)

Joseph Kalichstein and the Emerson String Quartet—The pianist assists each of the foursome's members in turn in Brahms' C-Minor Scherzo (with violinist Eugene Drucker), Schumann's "Märchenbilder" (with violist Lawrence Dutton), Webern's "Three Small Pieces" (Op. 11, with cellist David Finckel), and Mozart's A-Major Sonata (K. 526, with violinist Philip Setzer). All join for a performance of Brahms' Piano Quintet. (92nd Street Y. Feb. 21-22 at 8.)

New Juilliard Ensemble—Performing compositions by Carter (his "Penthode"), Magnus Lindberg, Robert Beaser, Riad Abdel-Gawad, and Valentin Silvestrov. (Alice Tully Hall. Feb. 21 at 8. For information about free tickets, which are required, call 769-7406.)

Marcia Butler—Oboist, with the Chamber Players of the League/ISCM, playing chamber works by Matthew Greenbaum, Harvey Sollberger, Eric Moe, Stefan Wolpe, Thea Musgrave, and Elizabeth Brown. (Weill Recital Hall. Feb. 21 at 8.)

American Brass Quintet—Performing consort music from Elizabethan England, arrangements of Monteverdi madrigals, and contemporary works by Maurice Wright, Gunther Schuller, and Eric Ewazen. (Juilliard Theatre, 155 W. 65th St. Feb. 22 at 8. For information about free tickets, which are required, call 769-7406.)

Arditti String Quartet—The intrepid foursome offers Dutilleux's "Ainsi la Nuit" and Berg's "Lyric Suite," in addition to spanking-new piano quintets (with Ursula Oppens assisting) by Charles Wuorinen and Henry Brant. (Alice Tully Hall. Feb. 23 at 8.)

Composers String Quartet—Offering quartets by Ruth Crawford, Wallingford Riegger (his Second), Mel Powell, and Carter (his Fourth). (Miller Theatre. Feb. 23 at 8.)

Marietta Simpson—The mezzo-soprano performs arias by Handel and songs by Brahms, Tchaikovsky, Chausson, Duparc, and John Musto, in addition to arrangements of spirituals; assisted by her sister, the pianist

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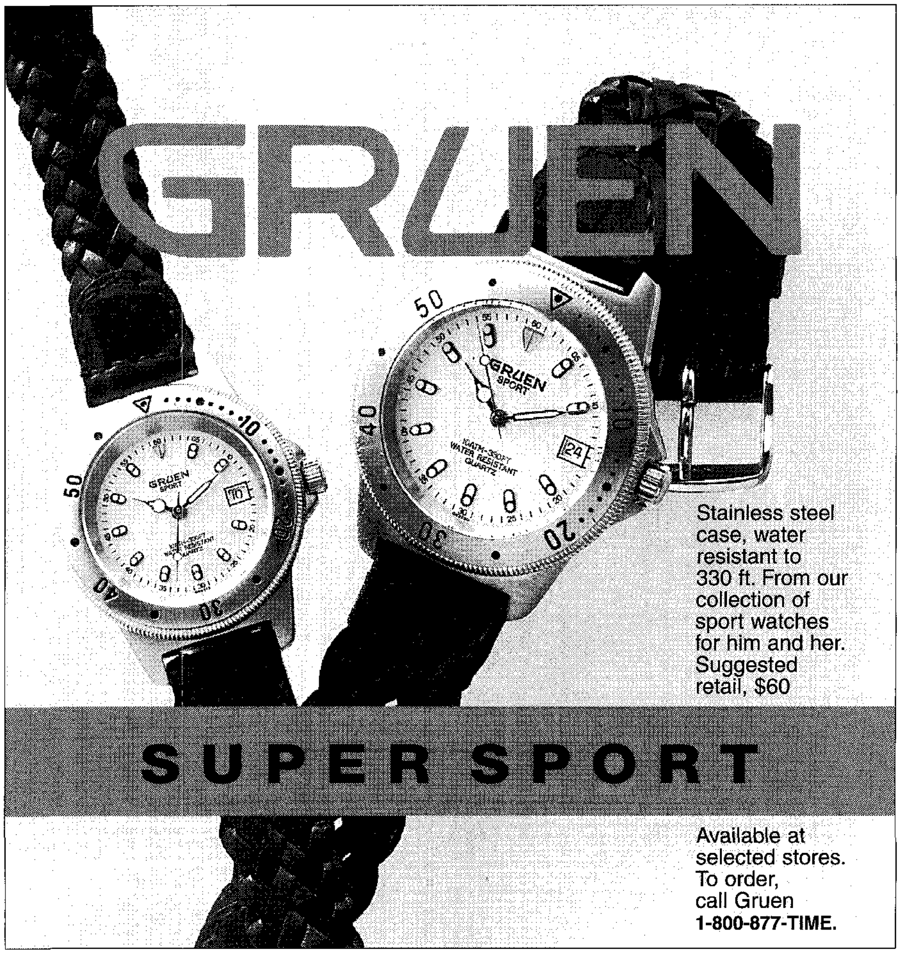

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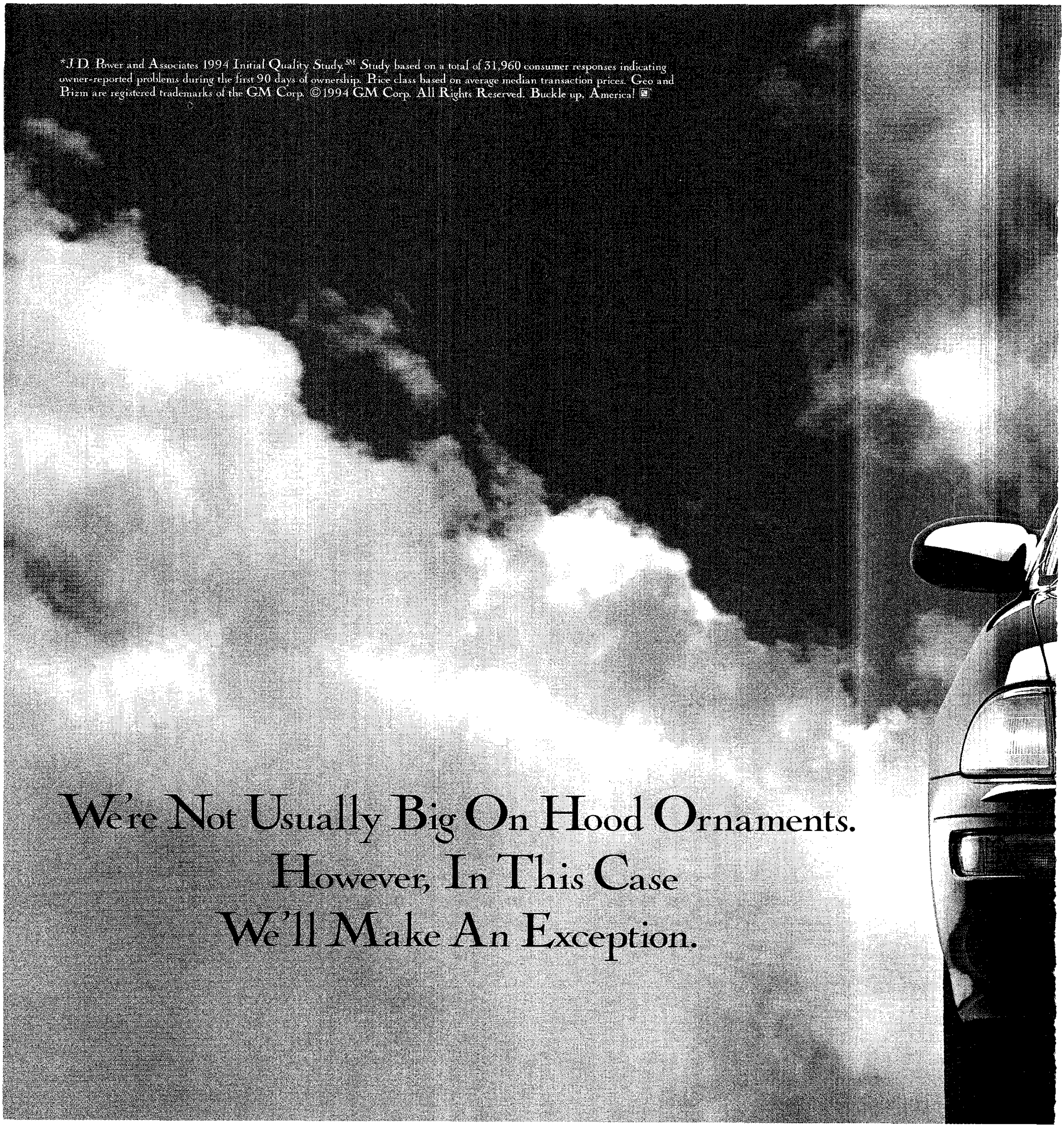
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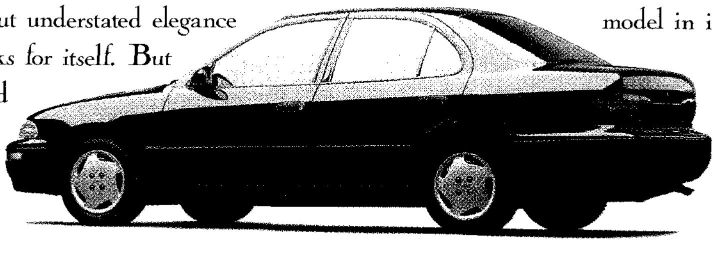

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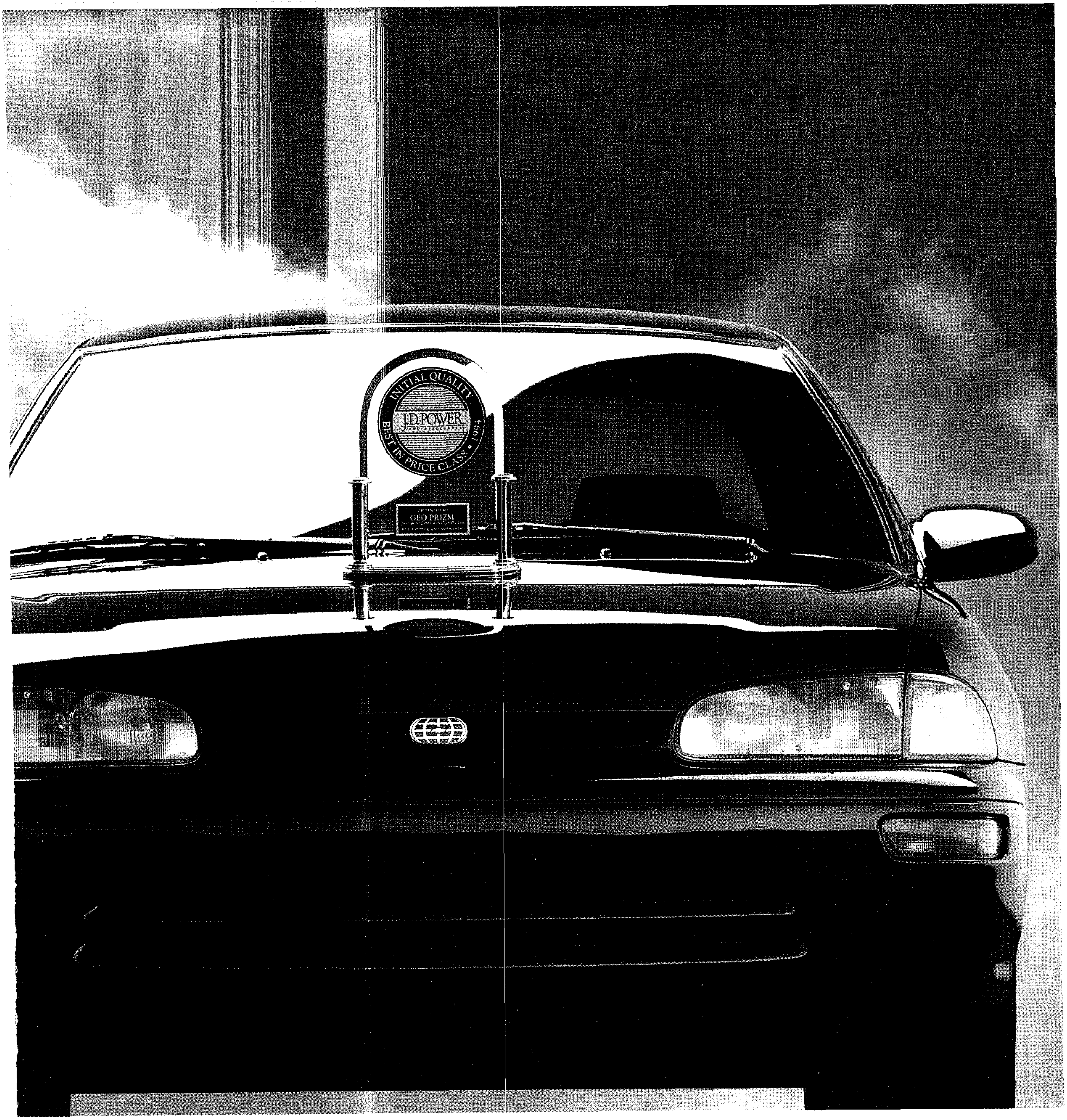
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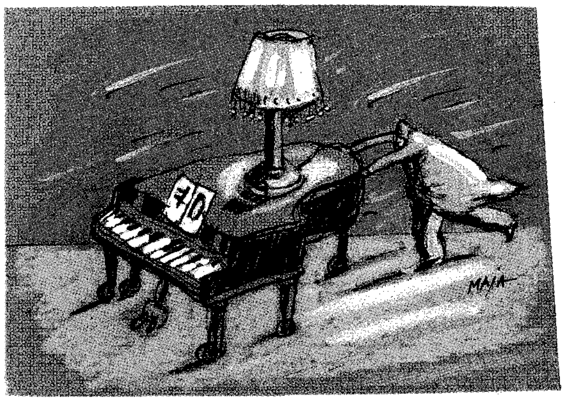
CLASSICAL MUSIC—Cont'd

Evelyn Simpson-Curenton. (Weill Recital Hall. Feb. 24 at 8.)

New England Conservatory Contemporary Music Ensemble—Brave Bostonians venture into twentieth-century works by Ives, John Heiss, Earl Kim, Peter Child, Gunther Schuller, and John Harbison (his "Mirabai Songs"). (Miller Theatre. Feb. 24 at 8.)



Music From Japan—The annual festival of the very old and the very new in the land of the rising sun. Feb. 24 at 8: Music by Toshi Ichiyanagi. . . . **NOTE:** The composer will offer a pre-concert lecture at 7. . . . ¶ Feb. 25 at 5: A retrospective of works commissioned by Music From Japan, including compositions by Akira Miyoshi, Yuji Takahashi, Mr. Ichiyanagi, Somei Satoh, Shigeaki Saegusa, and Akemi Naito. . . . ¶ Feb. 26 at 2: A lecture by music critic Kuniharu Akiyama, plus a musicians' roundtable moderated by John Rockwell. . . . ¶ Feb. 26 at 5: A concert featuring *sho* player Mayumi Miyata, oboist Randall Wolfgang, and percussionist Midori Takada. (Asia Society, Park Ave. at 70th St. 517-2742.)

Continuum—Presenting recent chamber works by the Georgian composer Giya Kancheli. (Alice Tully Hall. Feb. 25 at 7:30.)

Eduardo Fernández—Classical guitarist, performing music by Narváez, Carter (his "Changes"), Giuliani, Agustín Barrios, and Leo Brouwer. (Borden Auditorium, Manhattan School of Music, Broadway at 122nd St. 749-2802, ext. 428. Feb. 25 at 8.)

S.E.M. Ensemble—Presenting works by two of its members, Jay Elfenbein and Martha Mooke. (Willow Place Auditorium, 26 Willow Pl., Brooklyn Heights. Feb. 25 at 8. For information about tickets, call 1-718 488-7659.)

Baroque in the Morning—Ariel Shamai plays one of Bach's Partitas for Unaccompanied Violin; viola da gambist Beverly Au, theorbo player Richard Stone, and harpsichordist Dong-Sok Shin play Baroque sonatas. (Le Refuge Inn, 620 City Island Ave., City Island, the Bronx. 1-718 885-2478. Feb. 26 at noon.)

Garrick Ohlsson—The pianist continues his survey of *le tout* Chopin by playing the Twenty-four Preludes (Op. 28), Sonata No. 2 (the "Funeral March"), Three Nocturnes (Op. 9), Three Mazurkas (Op. 63), Five Mazurkas (Op. 7), and Two Polonaises (Op. 26). (Alice Tully Hall. Feb. 26 at 2. . . . **NOTE:** On Feb. 18 at 10 A.M., commentator David Dubal will join Mr. Ohlsson to present a three-hour workshop on the music of Chopin, at the Walter Reade Theatre. For ticket information, call 875-5050.)

Nicola Frisardi—The gold-medal winner of the 1989 Palm Beach Invitational International Piano Competition performs four sonatas by Scarlatti, Rachmaninoff's "Six Moments Musicaux," Robert Muczynski's "Masks," and a group of waltzes by Chopin. (Christie's, Park Ave. at 59th St. Feb. 26 at 2:30. No tickets necessary.)

David Hurd—Organist, performing Buxtehude's D-Minor Toccata and Te Deum verses, Bach's B-Minor Prelude and Fugue, Reger's Orgelstücke (Op. 59), and his own Te Deum Laudamus. (Church of St. Ignatius Loyola, Park Ave. at 84th St. 288-2520. Feb. 26 at 4.)

Music by Soulima Stravinsky—A concert of songs and chamber music by the late composer (and son of Igor), performed by the Amici Chamber Players. (Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. 355-6160. Feb. 26 at 8.)

Christopher O'Riley—Pianist, performing four of Shostakovich's preludes and fugues, Beethoven's "Diabelli" Variations, and his own transcriptions of organ works by Bach. (Walter Reade Theatre. Feb. 27 at 7:30. For information about tickets, call 875-5050.)

Anderson String Quartet—Chamber-music enthusiasts first knew this foursome as the Chaminade String Quartet, but the group changed its name to honor the late contralto Marian Anderson for opening classical-music performance opportunities to African-American musicians. In its New York-début recital, the ensemble will play Shostakovich's Quartet No. 8, Alvin Singleton's "Somehow We Can," and Mozart's G-Minor String Quintet (K. 516, with violist James Dunham). (Alice Tully Hall. Feb. 27 at 8.)

Nurit Tilles—The pianist performs Frederic Rzewski's "A Life (for John Cage)," Meredith Monk's "St. Petersburg Waltz," Ives' Piano Sonata No. 1, and her own "Raw Silk." (Bloomingdale House, 323 W. 108th St. 663-6021. Feb. 28 at 7.)

Tomohiro Okumura—Violinist, playing sonatas by Veracini and Bartók (his Second), as well as Nathan Milstein's "Paganiniana" and Chausson's "Concerto for Piano, Violin, and String Quartet" (in which the Mosaic String Quartet will assist); with pianist Robert Koenig. (Alice Tully Hall. Feb. 28 at 8.)

FOR KIDS

(Accompanied by parents or other adults.)

Sesame Street Live—When Big Bird lands on the New York stage, the sensitive ornithomorph promptly runs away—in the mistaken belief that his friends have forgotten his birthday. The neighborhood's Muppets and nice humans get together and find him. (Paramount, Madison Square Garden. 307-7171. Feb. 16 and Feb. 22 at 10:30; Feb. 17 at 10:30 and 7; Feb. 18-19 and Feb. 25-26 at 10:30, 2, and 5:30; Feb. 23-24 at 10:30 and 2; and Feb. 12 at 1 and 4:30.)

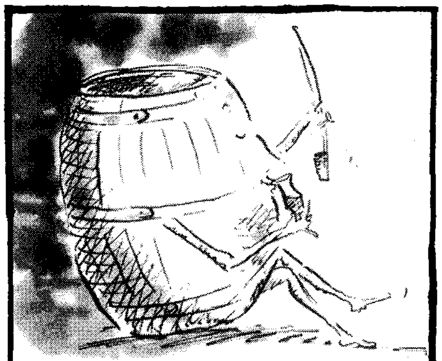
Walt Disney's World on Ice—"Beauty and the Beast" straps on the skates for a few kicks at Radio City Music Hall. (Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 247-4777. Feb. 17 at 7; Feb. 18-19 and Feb. 25 at 11, 3 and 7; and Feb. 20-24 and Feb. 26 at 1 and 5. Performances on Feb. 18-19 at 7 are in Spanish.)

"Goldilocks and the Three Bears"—A modern treatment of the bedroom farce as fairy tale for the family in crisis. (Promenade Theatre, Broadway at 76th St. 677-5959. Feb. 25-26 at 12:30.)

Carlota Santana Spanish Dance—A stomp-along flamenco concert. (Henry Street Settlement, 466 Grand St. 598-0400. Feb. 18 at 2.)

"Found Sounds"—Women of the Calabash, Music for Homemade Instruments, and Peter Schickele take everyday objects and make a concert. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. Feb. 25 at 11.)

Presidents' Week—While New York City schools take a midwinter break, from Feb. 20 through Feb. 24, extroverts and introverts alike can take their pick of special activities. TADA! children's theatre offers weeklong acting intensives, with sessions on the skills that make actors such good companions: listening, concentration, projection, and staging musical numbers. (120 W. 28th St. 627-1732.) . . . ¶ At the New York Botanical Garden, kids can spend their days outside hunting blooms, birdwatching, or finding animal tracks, or inside transplanting seedlings or



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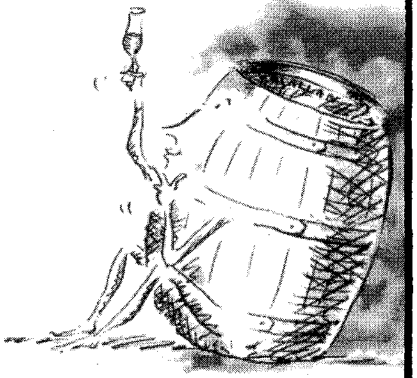

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FOR KIDS–Cont'd

making paper. (Bronx Park. 1-718 817-8700. No charge beyond park admission.) . . . ¶ Children who attend workshops at the Dana Discovery Center come home with landscape drawings, nature collages, vases, or bowls. (110th St. near Fifth Ave., in Central Park. 860-1370. Feb. 21-24, from 1 to 3.)

Black History Month—Feb. 18 at 1: Sahyini Morningstar uses puppets to tell the stories of Frederick Douglass, Duke Ellington, and Malcolm X. (Dana Discovery Center.) . . . ¶ Feb. 22 at 11, 1, and 3: After an introduction to the work of the painter Willie Johnson, children can make their own paintings in a re-creation of an artist's studio from Johnson's day, the Harlem Renaissance. (Children's Museum of Manhattan, 212 W. 83rd St. 721-1234.) . . . ¶ Feb. 21 at 2: Children can learn what it's like to dig for a living, in an archeology workshop that looks at artifacts from the Weeksville site, an early African-American settlement in New York City. (South Street Seaport Museum, 165 John St. 748-8757.)

The Little Orchestra Society—The program for the latest Lolli-Pops concert, "Tubby the Tuba and the Big Brass," includes works by Rorem, Mozart, and Bach. (Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. Feb. 25 at 10:30 and 11:45, and Feb. 26 at 12:30 and 1:45. For information about tickets, call 704-2100.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

Cutting Edge—The New York Sword Dance Festival revives ancient winter rites from the coal-mining regions of northern England. Accompanied by live fiddle and accordian music, circles of dancers weave intricate patterns with their swords, suggesting associations between weaponry and mysticism that predate the current Republican Congress. On Feb. 18-19, the dancers perform in libraries, museums, and public spaces around the city. All ten teams appear together on Feb. 18 (at 9:30, at Harkness Atrium, Broadway at 62nd St., and at 4:30, at Grand Central Terminal) and on Feb. 19 (at 2:30, at the Picnic House in Prospect Park, Brooklyn). For information about other venues, call 1-718 469-5015.

Carnaval and Carnevale—The Brooklyn Botanic Garden and Medgar Evers College throw an Island Days celebration cum Mardi Gras warm-up, on Feb. 26. The Garden, situated at the beachhead of Brooklyn's Little Caribbean, will offer island foods, lectures, crafts workshops, dancing, and tours of the tropical hothouses, from 1 to 6. The festivities continue at Medgar Evers with an evening of calypso, limbo, and parang dancing to soca and reggae music, from 6 to midnight. (Brooklyn Botanic Garden, 1000 Washington Ave., near Grand Army Plaza. There is no charge for the Garden party. For tickets to the evening concerts at Medgar Evers, 1650 Bedford Ave., call 1-718 270-6028.) . . . ¶ Feb. 26 at 3: I Giullari di Piazza, a troupe that performs Italian folk music and theatre, celebrates the *festa di carnevale* with a commedia-dell'arte farce, "La Canzone di Zeza." The *festa* has roots in Bacchic rites, which the troupe honors in the traditional way: with wine. After the show (it involves men playing women, a giant puppet king, and some foolishness about a marriage), the cast and audience join in a tarantella. (Synod Hall, Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Amsterdam Ave. at 110th St. 924-0077.)

Roots—Nekhena Evans, of New Bein' Enterprises, traces the evolution of the African art of hair-locking and demonstrates contemporary techniques for achieving the same effects. (Brooklyn Historical Society, 128 Pierrepont St. 1-718 624-0890. Feb. 26 at 2.)

Suits—For those who hunger for tabloid law East Coast-style, Fordham University has put together a one-day symposium on organized crime, with sessions on Italian, Canadian, and English branches. Panelists include F.B.I. and D.E.A officials, crime reporters, former members of the New York State Organized Crime Task Force, and a John Gotti defense attorney whose privy council was recorded by an F.B.I. bug. (Fordham University School of Law, 140 W. 62nd St. 636-6777. Feb. 22 at 4.)

Readings—Feb. 16 at 8: Blanche McCrary Boyd reads from her collection "The Redneck Way of Knowledge." (A Different Light Bookstore, 151 W. 19th St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Feb. 20 at 7:30: Galway Kinnell reads poems (by Smart, Rilke, and Dickinson, among others) and plays recordings (of Rossini, Donizetti, a frog, and a hermit thrush) that have inspired and influenced him. He ends the evening with readings of his own poems. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 645-5848.) . . . ¶ Feb. 20 at 8: The Canadian novelist Robertson Davies reads from his work. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100.) . . . ¶ Feb. 21 at 7:30: Katherine Mosby reads from her first novel, "Private Altars." (Books & Co., 939 Madison Ave., at 74th St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Feb. 24 at 7:30: Jennifer Egan reads from her novel, "The Invisible Circus." (Barnes & Noble, Sixth Ave. at 21st St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Feb. 27 at 8:15: Mark Strand introduces three poets—Jacqueline Osherow, Susan Prospere, and Patricia Storace—who will read from their collections. (92nd Street Y.) . . . ¶ Feb. 27 at 7:30: Rick Bass, Bill McKibben, and Jill Nelson read their contributions to "Last Great Places," a collection of essays written for the Nature Conservancy. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center.)

Talks—Feb. 16 at 8:30 A.M.: Publisher Harold Evans will host a breakfast chat about the ethical issues of biography, with Patti Davis, Julie Nixon Eisenhower, and biographers James Atlas and Patricia Morrisroe. (mad.61, 10 E. 61st St. 691-8543.) . . . ¶ Feb. 16 at 7: An evening of conversation and song in Irish, with Oíche Airneáil. (Glucksman Ireland House, New York University, 1 Washington Mews. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Feb. 21 at 7: Poet Tracie Morris, hip-hop producer Djinji Brown, *Village Voice* writer Greg Tate, and cultural critic Houston A. Baker, Jr., read hip-hop lyrics and speculate about their connections with poetry. (Poets House, 72 Spring St. Tickets at the door on the night of the talk.) . . . ¶ Feb. 22 at 7: As part of a lecture series on the classical tradition of architecture, David Easton talks about the American country house. (National Academy of Design, Fifth Ave. at 89th St. 369-4880.)

Walk—Feb. 18, Feb. 20, and Feb. 25-26, at 2: Sidewalks of New York takes a memorial stroll through Jaqueline Onassis's neighborhood. The tour group meets in front of the Cooper-Hewitt Museum, Fifth Ave. at 91st St. For reservations, call 662-5300.

SPORTS

Indoor Pro Beach Volleyball—The beach game is proving marketable these days, in part because it's telegenic: two players on each side, often of the sun-blond "Baywatch" variety, take off their shirts, dive around, get all sandy, and earn lots of money. On top of that, the game is entertainingly vicious. According to Karch Kiraly, the top-ranked player, "It's a brand of volleyball that's totally foreign to the volleyball many people are used to, the one you play till the hamburgers are done on the grill." On Feb. 25, the staff of Madison Square Garden will dump two hundred tons of sand on the Garden floor so that eight of the best teams can spike away in their element. Kiraly and his partner, Kent Steffes—the No. 1 team for the past three years—lead the field. The daylong tournament lasts from 1 to 9, which is a long time, so ticket holders are encouraged to wander the halls and purchase beachwear, rehydrate, or step into a tanning booth for that sunny February look. (Madison Square Garden. 465-6741.)

Harlem Globetrotters—On Feb. 18 at the Garden, the Globetrotters will probably extend their 8,333-game streak—a string of wins that stretches back to the Watergate era, when Red Klotz, of the professionally hapless New Jersey Reds, hit a buzzer beater. The basketball vaudevilleans will execute their usual derring-do—making half-court shots backward, hiding the ball in their pants, etc.—against the faithful opposition, who have changed their name to the Washington Generals, perhaps out of shame, perhaps to avoid confusion with another hapless yet professional Jersey basketball team. (Madison Square Garden. 465-6741. Feb. 18 at 1.)

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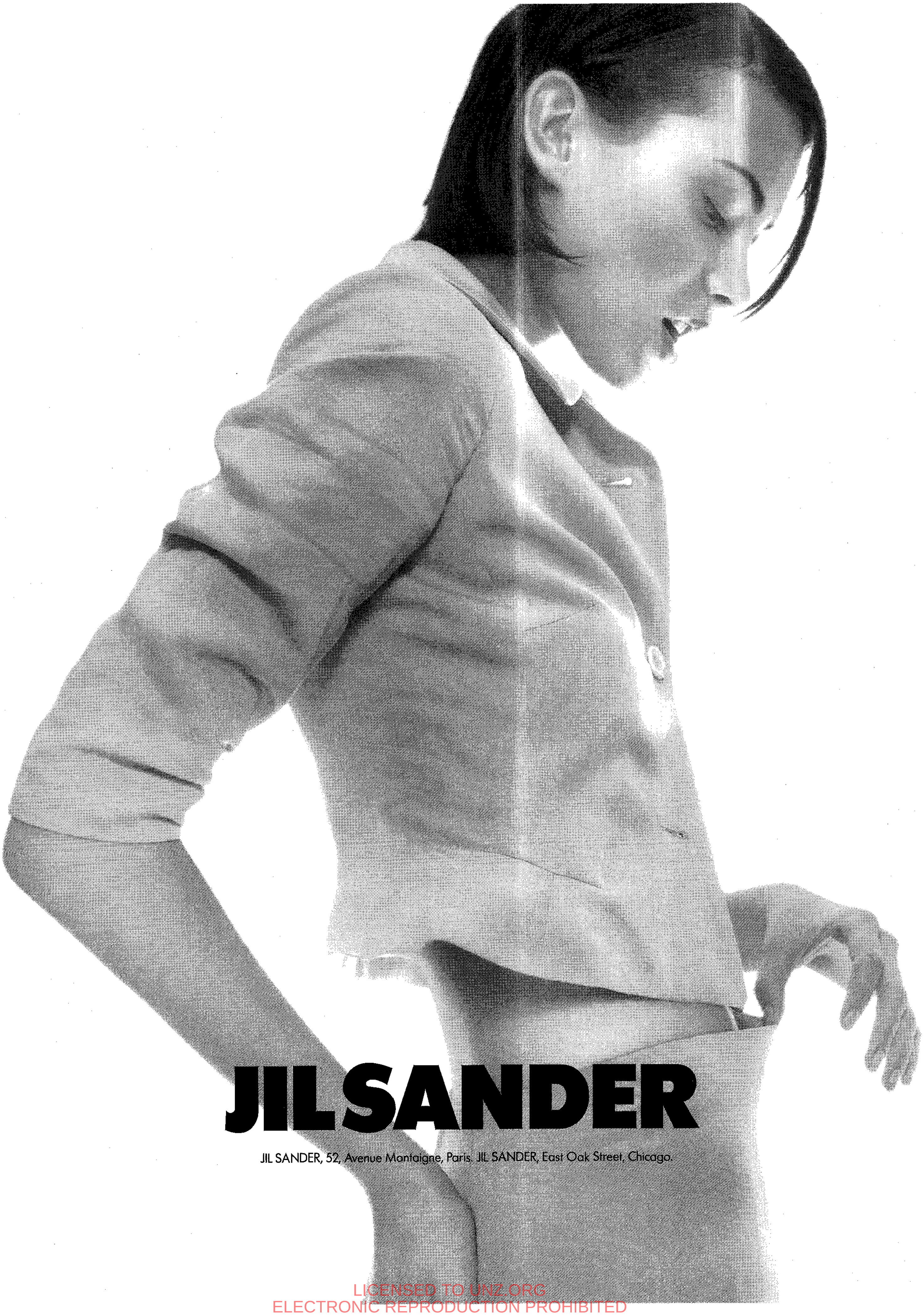
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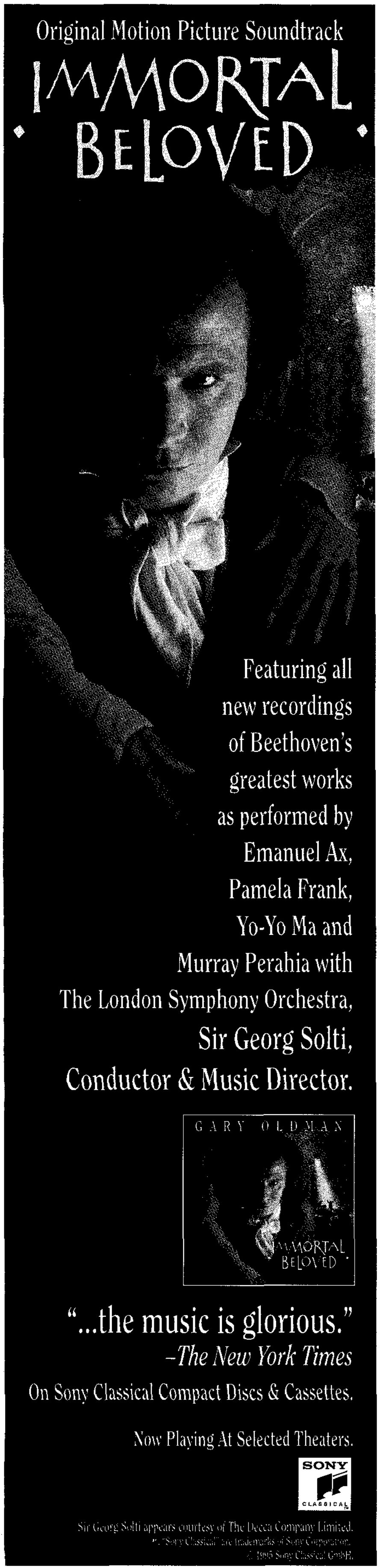
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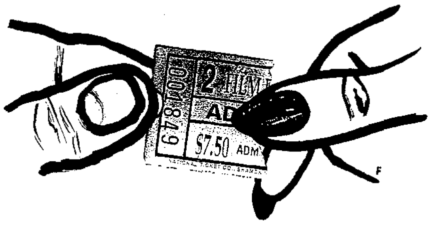

THE MOVIES

FILMS OPENING

Before the Rain—A drama set in Macedonia and London, about three sets of characters who seem to lead unrelated lives but who discover the opposite. With Katrin Cartlidge, Rade Serbedzija, Gregoire Colin, and Labina Mitevska. Written and directed by Milcho Manchevski. In Macedonian and English. Opening February 24. (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

The Brady Bunch Movie—Director Betty Thomas moves that happy family from Los Angeles in the seventies to Los Angeles in the nineties, with Shelley Long and Gary Cole in the roles created by Florence Henderson and Robert Reed. The kids are Christine Taylor, Jennifer Elise Cox, Olivia Hack, Christopher Daniel Barnes, Paul Sutera, and Jesse Lee. Henriette Mantel takes over from Ann B. Davis as Alice. Opening February 17. (Embassy 1.)

The Cow—A drama from the Czech Republic, set at the turn of the century, about a poor young farmer (Radek Holub) and the village butcher's mistress (Alena Mihulova). Adapted by the director, Karel Kachyna ("The Ear"), and Karel Cabradek from a work by Jan Prochazka. In Czech. Opening February 22. (Little Theatre, Public Theatre.)

Exotica—The Canadian writer-director Atom Egoyan's drama about the complicated lives of the patrons and employees of a strip club. With Bruce Greenwood, Mia Kirshner, Don McKellar, and Elias Koteas. Opening February 24.

Great Day in Harlem—A documentary. (Reviewed below in Current Films.) Opening February 17.

Heavyweights—Ben Stiller plays a fitness-camp martinet whose corpulent teen-age wards seize power. With Aaron Schwartz, Tom Hodges, Shaun Weiss, and Tom McGowan. Directed by Steven Brill, who shares script credit with Judd Apatow. Opening February 17. (Embassy.)

The Hunted—Christopher Lambert as a businessman in Japan who finds himself pursued by an assassin (John Lone) after he witnesses the murder of a young woman (Joan Chen). Written and directed by Jonathan Lawton. Opening February 24.

Just Cause—Sean Connery and Laurence Fishburne star as a Harvard law professor and a police detective, respectively, in a thriller about the fate of a convict (Blair Underwood) on death row. Directed by Arne Glimcher ("The Mambo Kings"). Written by Jeb Stuart and Peter Stone, from John Katzenbach's 1991 novel. Opening February 17.

Meet the Feebles—With a cast of fornicating, litigating, and hallucinating life-size animal puppets, this 1989 comedy by the New Zealand director Peter Jackson—a predecessor to his current "Heavenly Creatures"—promises to make the Muppets sit up and take notice. Opening February 22. (Film Forum.)

Once Were Warriors—A fictional account of a Maori family in present-day New Zealand. Directed by Lee Tamahori. Written by Riwia Brown, from Alan Duff's 1990 novel. Opening February 24. (Angelika Film Center and Paris.)

Sex, Drugs & Democracy—The director Jonathan Blank and his producer, Barclay Powers, interviewed more than fifty Netherlanders, including politicians, government hemp researchers, and brothel owners, for a documentary about life in the libertarian democracy. Opening February 17. (Cinema Village.)

Through the Olive Trees—One actor stands in for the director and the rest of the cast play themselves, in a drama by the Iranian writer-director Abbas Kiarostami, about a film that he (and they) made in earthquake-ravaged northern Iran. In Farsi. Opening February 17. (Village East Cinemas.)

The Walking Dead—Four African-American marines (Allen Payne, Eddie Griffin, Joe Morton, and Vonte Sweet) fight their way through the jungle during the Vietnam War, in an action film written and directed by Preston A. Whitmore II. Opening February 24.

Window to Paris—Yuri Mamin's comic fantasy about St. Petersburg roommates (Serguei Dontsov and Victor Michailov) who discover a window in their apartment that opens onto the City of Light. With Agnes Soral. Written by the director and Arkadi Tigai. In Russian and French. Opening February 17. (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

CURRENT FILMS

(The signed notes are by Whitney Balliett, Anthony Lane, Terrence Rafferty, and Michael Sragow. If a movie has been reviewed in The Current Cinema, the date of its review is given. Theatre addresses and phone numbers are listed on page 74.)

Bad Company—Ellen Barkin plays an industrial spy, and Laurence Fishburne is the C.I.A. agent who infiltrates her espionage ring, in a movie directed by Damian Harris. (Village East Cinemas, Sutton, 86th Street East Twin, 23rd St. West Triplex, 84th Street Sixplex, and Embassy.)

Before Sunrise—Richard Linklater's third movie is provocatively plotless. Jesse (Ethan Hawke) and Céline (Julie Delpy) meet on a train, decide to get off together, and have themselves a fine, sleepless time before parting the next day. That's it: various threats loom up and fade away, and the only suspense comes from wondering whether the two characters (who are pretty much the only characters) will stop talking long enough to have sex. The charm—the midsummer enchantment—never feels forced; it steals up and wins you. A true romance.—A.L. (1/30/94) (Village Theatre VII, First & 62nd Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, and Lincoln Square.)

Billy Madison—A comedy in which Adam Sandler, of "Saturday Night Live," must repeat grades one through twelve in six months before his father will give him control of the family's hotel empire. With Bridgette Wilson. Written by Sandler and Tim Herlihy. Directed by Tamra Davis. (First & 62nd Cinemas, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Waverly, Chelsea Cinemas, 62nd & Broadway, and National Twin.)

Boys Life—Three short films by New York directors, on the subject of gay life: "Pool Days," by Brian Sloan; "A Friend of Dorothy," by Raoul O'Connell; and "The Disco Years," by Robert Lee King. (Quad Cinema.)

Boys on the Side—In this semi-comic tearjerker, three seemingly incompatible women—a salty gay singer (Whoopi Goldberg), a young, restless beauty (Drew Barrymore), and an ailing career gal (Mary-Louise Parker)—bond on the run and settle down in Tucson. The ad says they share "the unconditional love that is always cherished by women and often envied by men." The picture is schmaltzy and phallus-shrivelling, too. Earthy, Sexy, and Sickly create a nontraditional family; men damage or frustrate them. (The token male happiness-maker, a cop who woos Barrymore, is so sweet and slow that you half expect him to compare life to a box of chocolates.) Herbert Ross directed, from a script by Don Roos.—M.S. (Village Theatre VII, 19th Street East 6, Murray Hill Cinemas, New York Twin, Orpheum VII, Lincoln Square, and Criterion Center.)

Brother Minister: The Assassination of Malcolm X—A documentary about the 1965 murder of the controversial Nation of Islam leader. Written and directed by Jack Baxter and Jefri Aalmuhammed. (57th St. Playhouse.)

DEATH AND THE MAIDEN—Ariel Dorfman's fashionable, overblown stage play turned into a flat, uninspired thriller by Roman Polanski. In an unnamed Latin-American country, an attorney (Stuart Wilson) and his wife (Sigourney Weaver) receive a visit from one Roberto Miranda (Ben Kingsley). The wife, convinced that Miranda is the man who tortured and raped her during their country's era of oppression, determines to get her own back; but all she has to go on is his voice, and the movie titillates us with the possibility that she has the wrong man. A more vulgar director—and less serious performers—might have had the nerve to admit that this is schlock posing as moral philosophy, but Polanski and his cast honor the self-importance of the script, and the result is fairly unwatchable.—A.L. (1/16/94) (Village Theatre VII. . . . ¶ Paris; through Feb. 23.)

GERMANY YEAR 90 NINE ZERO—The hero of Jean-Luc Godard's film is the American secret agent Lemmy Caution, who was also the protagonist of his 1965 film "Alphaville" (and who is played in both pictures by Eddie Constantine). Lemmy Caution is, we're told, "the last spy," returning to the West after the end of the Cold War; Godard follows him on the slow trek back from eastern Germany, through rubble, ominous-looking construction projects, and streets that unexpectedly summon the ghosts of German culture. Both the old spy and the aging filmmaker—the last modernist—are unnerved by the eerie, somnolent peace of reunified Germany; they're nostalgic for conflict. It's a brilliant movie, and it demonstrates convincingly that the elegiac, reflective tone of Godard's recent work shouldn't be taken as evidence of mellowing: even his elegies are provocations. In French and German.—T.R. (2/6/94) (Little Theatre, Public Theatre; through Feb. 21.)

A GREAT DAY IN HARLEM—A funny, moving, altogether miraculous documentary about how fifty-eight famous, near-famous, and not yet famous jazz musicians came to be photographed by Art Kane for *Esquire* in front of a brownstone on East 126th Street one morning in August of 1958. The movie, just under an hour long, is a mercurial mix of brief interviews with Kane and with musicians and bystanders who were at the shoot (only a dozen or so survive); alternate exposures (Kane took a hundred and twenty); various stills; an 8-mm. movie taken by Milt Hinton's wife, Mona; and sequences from the brilliant "Sound of Jazz" television special, which had aired just six months earlier and included many of the same musicians. The inspiration of Charles Graham, the film was produced by Jean Bach and Matthew Seig, and edited by Susan Peehl, who manages, by ingeniously juggling Kane's shots and Hinton's movie, to make you think you're standing on 126th Street in 1958. On the same bill is Gjon Mili's classic—and pardonably arty—jazz short, "Jammin' the Blues," made in 1944 with Lester Young, Harry Edison, Illinois Jacquet, and Sid Catlett.—W.B. (Reviewed in the Jazz column, 1/23/95.) (Quad Cinema; starting Feb. 17.)

HIGHER LEARNING—In this blood-and-thunder campus melodrama by John Singleton, parallel story lines about a Midwestern misfit turned skinhead (Michael Rapaport), a smart black track star (Omar Epps), and a naïve Orange County coed (Kristy Swanson) converge with an apocalyptic bang. Singleton diagrams such issues as athletic exploitation and racial polarization on the cheapest poster board and rouses snickers with his heavy-breathing treatment of Swanson's budding bisexuality. With Laurence Fishburne, Ice Cube, Jennifer Connelly, and Tyra Banks.—M.S. (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 19th Street East 6, Gemini, Orpheum VII, 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

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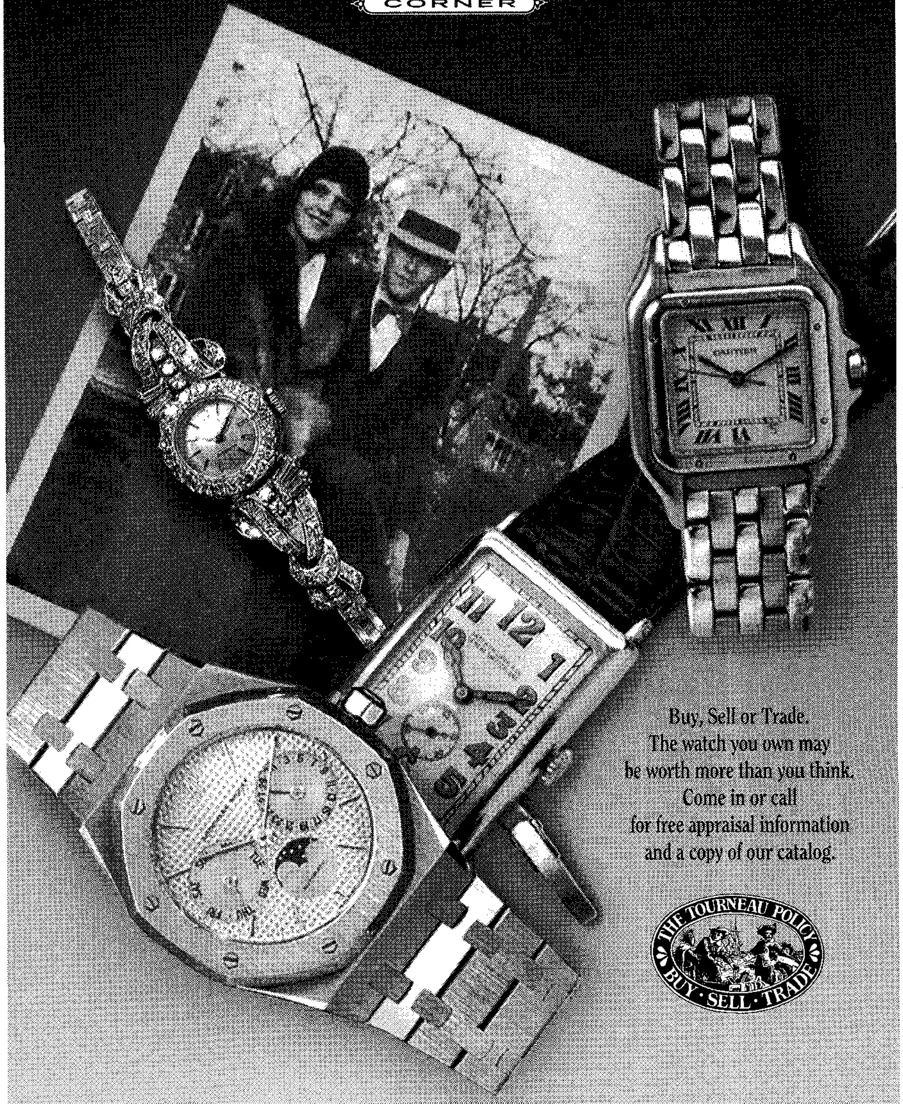

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CURRENT FILMS–Cont'd

(Christopher Lambert) strives to defeat the evil challenger Kane (Mario Van Peebles). The mountain landscapes of Scotland and Japan are more heroic than the two combatants, who end up facing off in present-day New York and New Jersey anyway. Lambert is brooding and wooden—a piece of kindling that won't kindle. Van Peebles tries too hard to rise to his Genghis Khan getup: his performance is led around by his nose ring.—M.S. (Village East Cinemas, Murray Hill Cinemas, Manhattan Twin, Orpheum VII, 23rd St. West Triplex, Columbus Circle, and Embassy.)

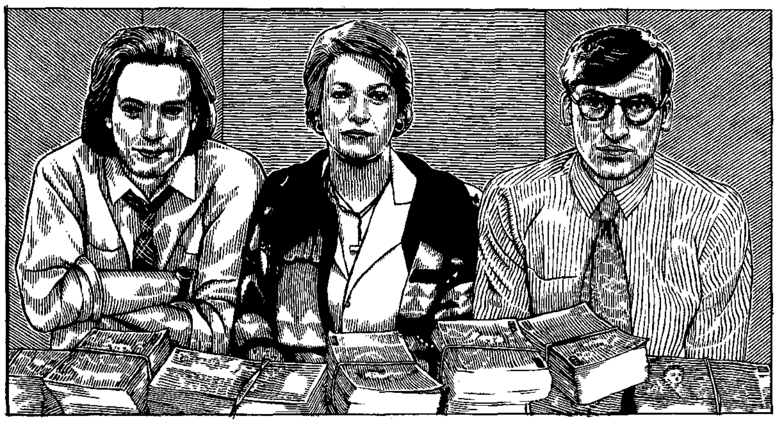
HOOP DREAMS—An engrossing documentary about two inner-city Chicago teen-agers, William Gates and Arthur Agee, who aspire to careers in professional basketball. The filmmakers—Steve James, Frederick Marx, and Peter Gilbert—follow them all the way through high school. In the course of the movie's patient, sympathetic narrative (the running time is close to three hours), our reaction to the heroes' progress changes decisively, and for the better: at first we're assessing their chances, measuring them for N.B.A. uniforms; by the end we're rooting for them simply to survive the process without losing all their exuberance and drive and creative spirit.—T.R. (10/17/94) (Quad Cinema and Carnegie Hall Cinema.)

IMMORTAL BELOVED—Bernard Rose's new biography of Beethoven (Gary Oldman) filters our view of the musician through the composer's secretary, Anton Schindler (Jeroen Krabbé, who looks more like Beethoven than Oldman does). But the film is flat. Only once does it aim high, in a great kitsch-cosmic shot of the infant genius lost in a sea of stars. Valeria Golino, Isabella Rossellini, and the admirable Johanna Ter Steege play the three main women in Beethoven's life—the nominations for Best Supporting Muse. There's no surprise in the winner, nor in the choice of music—a roster of greatest hits.—A.L. (Village Theatre VII, First & 62nd Cinemas, East 85th Street, Chelsea Cinemas, and Lincoln Square.)

IN THE MOUTH OF MADNESS—John Carpenter's return to his favored terrain, the horror movie, is only a partial success—an awkward mix of the creepy and the silly. Sam Neill plays an investigator sent to find a man named Sutter Cane, the author from hell. Cane's junk novels sell by the million and drive his readers mad; half the population, apparently, is coming apart at the seams. It's a fine, provocative topic, fringed with Carpenter's political exasperation: any country that can go ape over a cheap potboiler—or a cheap politician—has got serious problems. But the outcome is nowhere near as cool, or as solidly scary, as his best work. (And Julie Carmen, as Neill's sidekick, is no Adrienne Barbeau.) Once the film tries to suggest that everything is happening inside Cane's imagination, it loses steam; Carpenter is surely not the man to tell us that fantasy is stronger than fact. What about the weirdo in the white mask coming up the stairs in "Halloween"? *He* looked pretty real.—A.L. (2/13/95) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 19th Street East 6, Murray Hill Cinemas, Gotham Cinema, Orpheum VII, 84th Street Sixplex, and Astor Plaza.)

JERKY BOYS—A movie featuring the antics of Johnny B. and Kamal, two New York-based performers whose shtick is making prank phone calls. Directed by James Melkonian, who also wrote the screenplay with Rich Wilkes, John G. Brennan, and Kamal Ahmed. (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Cinema II, 86th Street East Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, and 84th Street Sixplex. . . . ¶ Embassy 1; through Feb. 16. . . . ¶ Embassy; starting Feb. 17.)

JLG BY JLG—In Jean-Luc Godard's idiosyncratic diary movie, which has the subtitle "A Self-Portrait in December," the sixty-four-year-old filmmaker, looking like a dishevelled, distracted old crank, rattles around in his dimly lit apartment and goes for solitary, bundled-up walks in a wintry Swiss landscape. The opening scenes set a dirgelike tone: Godard, contemplating a photo of himself as a boy, generalizes his personal melancholia into a universal lament for the despised, cast-out artist. But before long he starts cutting up, violating the solemn unity of the self-portrait with nutty slapstick sketches in which he decks himself out like Groucho and makes fun of his own insularity. The movie turns into a lyrical comedy of self-transcendence: Godard's intellectual pratfalls finally break the ice that separates him from the rest of the world. In French.—T.R. (2/6/94) (Little Theatre, Public Theatre; through Feb. 21.)



Christopher Eccleston, Kerry Fox, and Ewan McGregor in "Shallow Grave."

MICHAEL KUPPERMAN

LEGENDS OF THE FALL—Edward Zwick's film, based on Jim Harrison's brawny novella, is a father-and-sons saga, in which three handsome brothers (Brad Pitt, Aidan Quinn, Henry Thomas) compete for the approval of a stern patriarch (Anthony Hopkins). It gets sillier as it goes. Halfway through, Pa suffers a stroke, and Hopkins' performance turns into a mad music-hall impersonation of a peg-leg pirate. His outrageous scenery-chewing reveals the movie's true nature: it's the Monty Python version of "Bonanza." Also with Julia Ormond.—T.R. (1/9/95) (Village Theatre VII, 34th St. East, Beekman, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, Ziegfeld, and Lincoln Square.)

LITTLE WOMEN—Gillian Armstrong's movie is more naturalistic—less storybooklike—than the previous screen versions of Louisa May Alcott's novel about a poor but noble New England family in the eighteen-sixties. In this rendering, the Marches—mother, father (mostly absent), and four daughters—inhabit a coherent, fully realized world. Winona Ryder, as the aspiring writer Jo,

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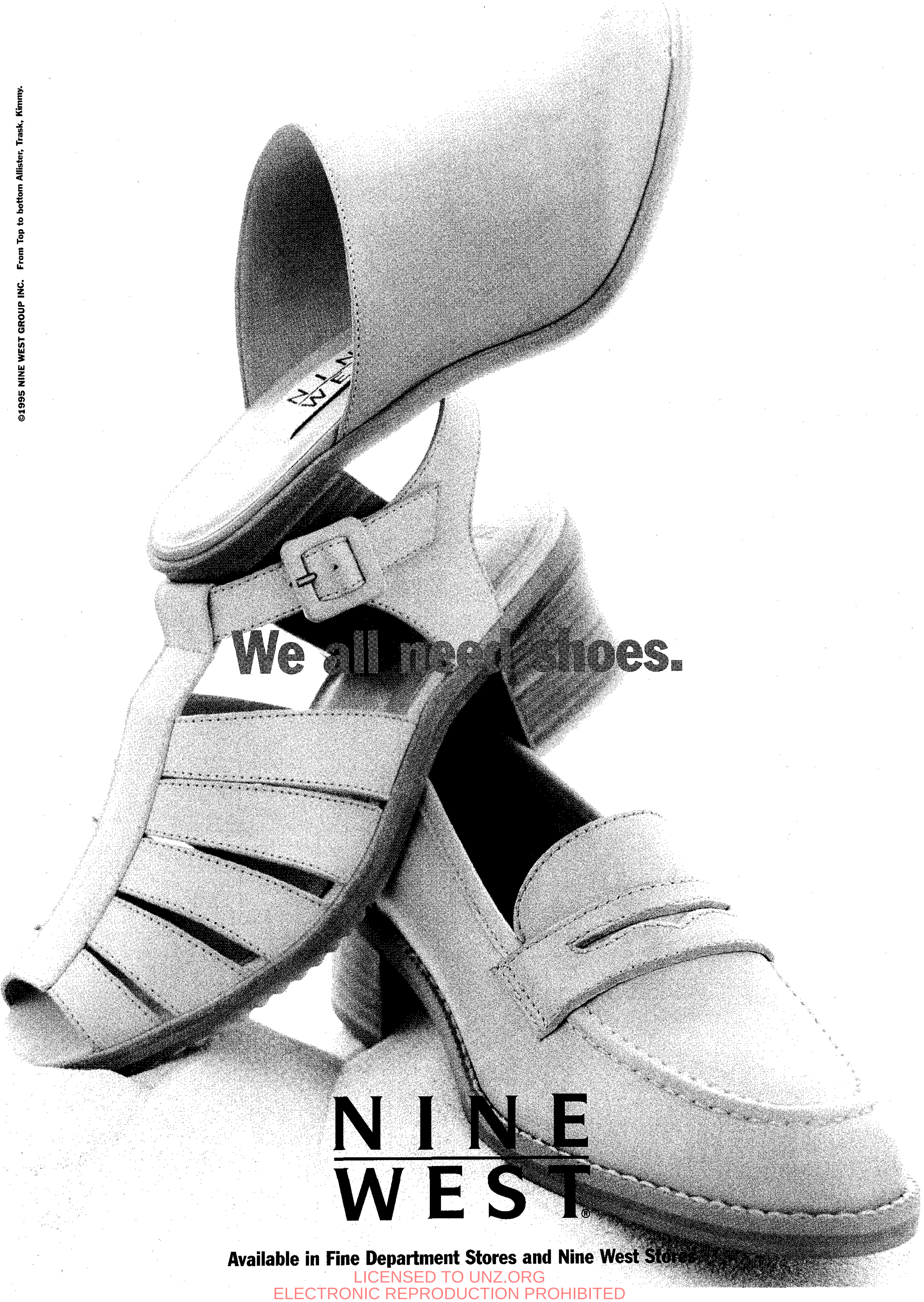
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gives a luminous performance. Also with Susan Sarandon, Trini Alvarado, Claire Danes, Kirsten Dunst, Samantha Mathis, Christian Bale, Gabriel Byrne, and Mary Wickes.—T.R. (1/9/95) (34th Street Showplace, First & 62nd Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, and Lincoln Square.)

The Madness of King George—Alan Bennett's stage play has moved to the screen, with the same star (Nigel Hawthorne), the same director (Nicholas Hytner), and the same story, about the King of England's decline, in the years 1788-89, from cheerful disciplinarian to lewd, unsleeping ranter. It's a fine dramatic predicament—and that's how it stays, never really pressing forward or pulling us into a plot. But there is plenty of relish here—in Ian Holm's fierce turn as a country physician, and in Hawthorne's blend of thundering and whimpers.—A.L. (1/16/94) (Angelika Film Center, 19th Street East 6, Baronet, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

A Man of No Importance—Poignant whimsy about a sexually repressed gay bus conductor (Albert Finney) in early-sixties Dublin. He regales his passengers with the words of Oscar Wilde, stages "Salome" in a church hall, and eventually struts out of the closet in a Wildean getup, complete with green carnation. The writer, Barry Devlin, and the director, Suri Krishnamma, have conceived their hero as such a gentle, eccentric dreamer that Finney can't locate a core; he relies on tortuous expressions of elfish desperation.—M.S. (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Martha & Ethel—The director, Jyll Johnstone, and her co-producer, Barbara Ettinger, have made a documentary about the two nannies who started working for their respective families in the fifties. (Quad Cinema and Lincoln Square.)

Miami Rhapsody—Gwyn (Sarah Jessica Parker) loves Matt (Gil Bellows)—only she's not sure. Her mom (Mia Farrow) loves a young male nurse (Antonio Banderas)—only she's not sure, either; maybe she really loves Gwyn's dad (Paul Mazursky). And so forth. David Frankel wrote and directed this comedy, which sounds like a lot of fun but somehow manages to be hardly any fun at all.—A.L. (Village East Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Cinema I, and Lincoln Square.)

Murder in the First—In 1941, an inmate of Alcatraz, Henri Young (Kevin Bacon), is tried for killing a fellow-prisoner. It seems like a clean case until a pushy young lawyer (Christian Slater) argues that the real killer is Alcatraz itself, and in particular the prison's sadistic warden (Gary Oldman, as you would expect). Marc Rocco is the director turned defense attorney: his driving motive is to prove rather than to show, and his hammer blows (along with Bacon's and Oldman's) would wear you down fast if it weren't for Slater. Playing the hero of an issues movie is usually a thankless task, but Slater gets better with every picture, and he carries this one with ease.—A.L. (Village East Cinemas, 34th Street Showplace, Gemini, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

Nobody's Fool—Paul Newman plays Sully, a divorced, erratically employed construction worker in a dingy upstate New York town. Robert Benton's movie (based on a novel by Richard Russo) is essentially a series of low-key comic vignettes in which the hero tries to deal with the exasperating presence of other people: irritable neighbors, demanding friends, disappointed family members. Not much happens, but the picture bobs along amiably to the rhythm of Newman's dry, deeply funny performance, and the tiny pleasures accumulate like the snow that covers the town. The terrific supporting cast includes Bruce Willis, Melanie Griffith, Jessica Tandy, and Gene Saks.—T.R. (Village Theatre VII, 19th Street East 6, 34th Street Showplace, Tower East, Guild, Lincoln Square, and Metro Cinema.)

Pulp Fiction—In Quentin Tarantino's celebrated picture, John Travolta, Samuel L. Jackson, Uma Thurman, Tim Roth, Harvey Keitel, Christopher Walken, and Bruce Willis parade through two and a half hours of complicated, cross-weaving Los Angeles plots, some of which are more gripping than others; the talk is dirty and funny, the violence always waiting just around the corner. It's a bright and startling picture, but the next day, it seems like a dream: the film attacks your senses and gives you almost nothing to remember it by, let alone to nourish you.—A.L. (10/10/94) (Village East Cinemas, Murray Hill Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, and Embassy.)

The Quick and the Dead—Sharon Stone dons leather pants and packs a six-gun in a Western directed by Sam Raimi. With Gene Hackman, Russell Crowe, and Leonardo DiCaprio. Written by Simon Moore. (Village Theatre VII, 19th Street East 6, Murray Hill Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, Orpheum VII, Lincoln Square, and National Twin.)

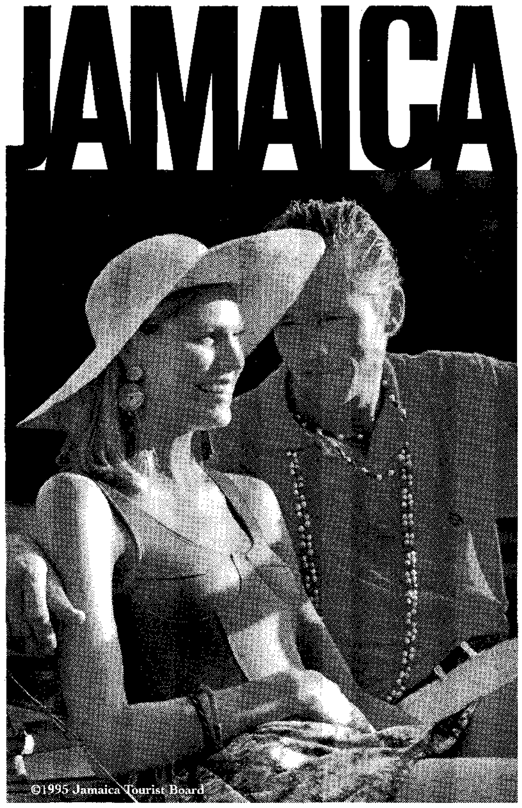
Red—The last and best film in the trilogy that began with the baffling "Blue" and continued with the more acrid "White"; here all the skills of the director, Krzysztof Kieślowski, are brought into melancholy play. Blind chance or benign fate (according to your point of view) brings Valentine (Irène Jacob), a young model living alone in Geneva, into contact with a retired judge (Jean-Louis Trintignant) with a predilection for eavesdropping on telephone conversations. In time Valentine's repulsion shades into curiosity, and from there into affection. And the movie itself shades from coldness and contrivance into a story as touching and mysterious as anything Kieślowski has ever made. In French.—A.L. (11/28/94) (68th St. Playhouse, Quad Cinema, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Sankofa—A model (Oyafunmike Ogunlano) on a photo shoot in West Africa is hurled back in time to the era of slavery, in a film written and directed by Haile Gerima. (Thalia.)

The Secret of Roan Inish—A ten-year-old girl (Jeni Courtney) uncovers her family's history along Ireland's northwest coast, with help from her grandparents (Mick Lally and Eileen Colgan) and a creature that is half-seal, half-human (Susan Lynch). Written and directed by John Sayles. Based on Rosalie K. Fry's 1957 novella "Secret of the Ron Mor Skerry." (Angelika Film Center, Eastside Cinema, and Lincoln Square.)

Shallow Grave—This claustrophobic chamber piece, set mostly in a Scottish apartment, poses an old Hitchcock question—what's the best way to lose a dead body?—and comes up with some fresh and bloody answers. Kerry Fox, Ewan McGregor, and Christopher Eccleston are the three roommates confronted by the corpse of their new lodger and the stash of drug money that he has left behind. They do the obvious thing (obvious, at any rate, according to the juicy amoral standards that prevail here): they bury the body and keep the cash. Greed and paranoia soon kick in, and the plot, smartly worked out by screenwriter John Hodge, marches toward its climax. Not that you care too much how it ends up or what happens to these people—the film is less a thriller than a frosty exercise in logic. But the director, Danny Boyle, does wonders with a small budget, and the suave, dense-hued look of his movie stays with you long after the horror has evaporated.—A.L. (2/13/95) (Village Theatre VII and Lincoln Square.)

Strawberry and Chocolate—The Cuban director Tomás Gutiérrez Alea charts the efforts of Diego (Jorge Perugorria), a gay artist, to seduce David (Vladimir Cruz), a straight and, frankly, rather boring student. It's a daring movie to have come out of Cuba, although Gutiérrez Alea's grasp of the radical temperament may seem unsophisticated to audiences here. Diego kicks out against government restrictions, David lives quietly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CURRENT FILMS—Cont'd

within them; wouldn't it have been more intriguing the other way around? Co-directed by Juan Carlos Tabio. In Spanish.—A.L. (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Tsahal—A five-hour documentary by Claude Lanzmann—who made "Shoah"—about the Tsava Haganah Leisrael, or Israeli Defense Forces. In French and Hebrew. (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

The Wooden Man's Bride—In northwestern China in the nineteen-twenties, kidnappers disrupt the arranged marriage of a young woman (Wang Lan). With Chang Shih, Wang Yumei, and the Taiwanese pop star Kao Mingjun. Directed by Huang Jianxin. Written by Yang Zhengguang, from "Wu Kui," by Jia Pingau. In Mandarin. (Film Forum; through Feb. 21.)

THEATRE ADDRESSES

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EAST SIDE

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St. (995-2000).
Little Theatre, Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171).
Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 36 E. 8th (477-6600).
Village Theatre VII, 3rd Ave. at 11th (982-0400).
Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th (924-3363).
Village East Cinemas, 2nd Ave. at 12th (529-6799).
19th Street East 6, B'way at 19th (260-8000).
Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th (689-6548).
34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th (532-5544).
34th St. East, 241 E. 34th (683-0255).
Eastside Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 55th (755-3020).
Sutton I and 2, 3rd Ave. at 57th (759-1411).
Gotham Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 58th (759-2262).
Plaza, 42 E. 58th (355-3320).
Manhattan Twin, 3rd Ave. at 59th (935-6420).
59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th (759-4630).
Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th (355-1663).
Cinema I, Cinema II, and Cinema 3rd Avenue, 3rd Ave. at 60th (753-6022).
First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd (513-5408).
Gemini I and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th (832-1670).
Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th (737-2622).
New York Twin, 2nd Ave. at 67th (744-7339).
68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th (734-0302).
Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st (879-1313).
East 85th Street, 1st Ave. at 85th (249-5100).
Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th (534-1880).
Orpheum VII, 3rd Ave. at 86th (876-2400).
86th Street East Twin, 3rd Ave. at 86th (249-1144).

WEST SIDE

Film Forum, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110).
Waverly I and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd (929-8037).
Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th (929-3350).
Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th (255-8800).
Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd (513-5402).
23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd (989-0060).
Guild, 33 W. 50th (757-2406).
Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th (765-7600).
57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th (581-7360).
Carnegie Hall Cinemas, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th (265-2520).
Angelika 57, 225 W. 57th (586-1900).
Paris, 4 W. 58th (980-5656).
Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th (752-5959).
Columbus Circle, B'way at 61st (247-5070).
62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd (265-7466).
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, B'way at 63rd (757-2280).
Regency, B'way at 67th (724-3700).
Lincoln Square, B'way at 68th (336-5000).
84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th (877-3600).
Thalia, B'way at 95th (316-4962).
Metro Cinema I and 2, B'way at 99th (222-1200).
Olympia I and II, B'way at 107th (865-8128).

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Center, B'way at 44th (354-0900).
Embassy I, B'way at 46th (302-0494).
Embassy 2, 3, and 4, 7th Ave. at 47th (730-7262).
Astor Plaza, 44th St. at B'way (869-8340).
National Twin, B'way at 44th (869-0950).

REVIVALS

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael and Michael Sragow. Theatre addresses and phone numbers appear with the listings following these notes.)

Alexander the Great (1956)—While his father, Philip of Macedonia, battles the Greek city-states, Alexander comes to maturity amid palace intrigues comparable to those of "I, Claudius." Then he conquers the world. During the filming of this CinemaScope epic, the writer-director, Robert Rossen, said that he intended to portray Alexander as a visionary who tries to fuse Europe and Asia but ends up destroying other people and himself. Whether because Rossen's own reach exceeded his grasp, or because the distributors slashed forty minutes from the filmmaker's three-hour cut, Alexander spends more screen time being an imperialist glory hound than an ancient One Worlder. The finished film lacks drive, rhythm, and clarity. But trim, goldilocked Richard Burton is magnetic as Alexander, and the valiant supporting cast includes Fredric March (as Philip), Danielle Darrieux, Claire Bloom, Michael Hordern, Peter Cushing, and Stanley Baker.—M.S. (Museum of Modern Art; Feb. 24 and 28.)

Shirley Temple films at the American Museum of the Moving Image.

Body and Soul (1947)—Robert Rossen had planned to film the story of welterweight boxing champ Barney Ross until Ross confessed to a drug addiction—a movie-code taboo. Rossen and his screenwriter, Abraham Polonsky, then made the hero a generic scrapper named Charley Davis, filched a climax from Hemingway's "Fifty Grand," and, with cinematographer James Wong Howe, brought off their pastiche with brio. They get the audience rooting for their impoverished Jewish fighter despite the corruption that awaits him at the top; they shape the falling action so that Charley can redeem himself only if he refuses to take a dive—and wins one more time. John Garfield plays Charley, and his acting freshens as the character wears out: he makes moral fatigue palpable. With Lilli Palmer, William Conrad, and Canada Lee. Francis Lyon and Robert Parrish won the Oscar for editing.—M.S. (Museum of Modern Art; Feb. 19 and 27.)

Johnny O'Clock (1947)—Robert Rossen made his directing début with this lightweight hard-boiled melodrama (which he also wrote). Dick Powell steps lively as the title character, a slick gambling-club manager who matches wits with his jealous, thuggish boss (Thomas Gomez) and a smart homicide cop (Lee J. Cobb). Rossen injects humor and tension without getting too campy. He plays on the theatricality of his hero's name—"O'Clock, O'Clock, O'Clock," Gomez laments, "all the time it kept ticking in my head." Nina Foch plays a sacrificial lamb; Evelyn Keyes and Ellen Drew provide the sex appeal.—M.S. (Museum of Modern Art; Feb. 17.)

Salt of the Earth (1954)—The raw material for this social realist movie, made in a semi-documentary style, is a 1951-52 strike of Mexican-American zinc miners in New Mexico. The picture was sponsored by the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers (expelled from the C.I.O. in 1950 as Communist dominated), made by blacklisted filmmakers, and financed by money "borrowed from liberal Americans." The miners are supposedly striking for equality with the "Anglos," but the strike is not a bargaining weapon for definite limited objectives. It's inflated with lessons, suggestions, and implications. "Strike" here is used in its revolutionary meaning as a training ground in solidarity, a preparation for the big strike to come; it's a microcosm of the coming revolution. And a pedagogical tone, reminiscent of the thirties, is maintained throughout much of the movie: these strikers are always teaching each other little constructive lessons, and their dialogue is blown up to the rank of folk wisdom. Rosaura Revueltas, the Mexican actress who has the leading role, is nobility incarnate—the Madonna on the picket line. Directed by Herbert J. Biberman; written by Michael Wilson.—P.K. (Anthology Film Archives; Feb. 26.)

The Well-Digger's Daughter (1940)—The most famous French comedy about illegitimacy stars Raimu as the well-digger, Fernandel as his assistant, and the lovely Josette Day (the beauty of "Beauty and the Beast") as the erring daughter. Undeservedly popular, this pastoral romp, written and directed by Marcel Pagnol, did much to convince a genertion of art-house patrons that the French who lived close to the soil were warm, witty, and wise. Actually, Raimu and Fernandel, both products of the Marseilles music halls, were about as representative of indigenous peasant humor as an American burlesque graduate like Bert Lahr was to rural humor. But Pagnol knew not only how to use his actors, but how to use traditional, stylized comedy plots in a natural setting and make them look as if they grew there. He also knew how to rework a hit; this movie is a spin-off of "The Baker's Wife." (It took Clouzot to shatter the image of French character that Pagnol had given to the world.) In French.—P.K. (Museum of Modern Art; Feb. 20.)

A Woman of Affairs (1928)—Greta Garbo was never more rapturous than in this adaptation of Michael Arlen's 1924 novel "The Green Hat." She and Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., are cast as sister and brother, and with their matching profiles they're probably the most glamorous sister and brother lookalikes in film history. Garbo plays a daring, sleekly groomed woman of the twenties who isn't considered good enough to marry the handsome aristocratic stiff (John Gilbert) whom she loves. It turns out that she has the finer code of honor. But Garbo transcends this moral framework: as a woman in love, she has a sensuality that's dreamlike—it knows no bounds. (Watch her in the hospital scene.) The cast includes John

ROBERT RISKO

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PROJECTIONS

Buster's Birthday

Early in life, Joseph Francis Keaton became known as Buster, and the name stuck—an ideal tribute not just to his try-anything toughness but to the fact that everything around him kept breaking down. His father, who included the tiny Buster in the family vaudeville act, used to toss him into the orchestra pit for the sake of a crash and a laugh. No wonder his films reek of chaos. He boards an ocean liner, and it goes adrift; he stands in front of a house, and a wall falls down around him; fiancées and boulders chase him down a hill. Yet his urge to stand and fight, to let the waters rage and rise but never close over his head, has left us with the most affecting and graceful body of comic work in the history of movies.

The centenary of Keaton's birth is not until October 4, but Film Forum, quick on the draw, is eager to get the celebrations going. In a season that runs until March 16, you can catch everything from the gloriously familiar ("The General," "Steamboat Bill, Jr.") to the temptingly obscure; if for some crazy reason you haven't seen "Estrellados," the Spanish-language version of Keaton's début in talkies, now is your chance. Other rarities: cheap two-reelers made for Columbia, collaborations with Fatty Arbuckle and Jimmy Durante, plus, on March 2, a collection of commercials, trailers, and three Keaton-directed M-G-M shorts from 1938, including "Life in Sometown U.S.A."

It sounds like perfect Keaton. As the years pass, his genius seems ever more specifically American. In his affectionate period re-creations of the Civil War; in his willingness to play the dandy, the jock, and the social swell; and, above all, in the ease with which he just *happens* upon courage, almost despite himself, in the midst of trouble—in all this, Keaton became as potent (and modest) an incarnation of the national temper as Jimmy Stewart. He took slapstick closer to the virtues of the Western than seemed possible; his pratfalls were heroic. If he found nothing to smile about, that only proves his persistence. Besides, as this alluring season will show, he could leave the smiling up to us.

—Anthony Lane

REVIVALS—Cont'd

Mack Brown, Lewis Stone, Hobart Bosworth, and Dorothy Sebastian. Directed by Clarence Brown, from a script by Bess Meredyth. It's an elegantly sumptuous M-G-M production, with cinematography by William Daniels, art direction by Cedric Gibbons, and gowns by Adrian.—P.K. (Museum of Modern Art; Feb. 17.)

LATE RUNS, CLASSICS, ETC.

Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between Eighth and Ninth Aves. (246-1583)—"Junior" (Ivan Reitman). . . . "Mary Shelley's Frankenstein" (Kenneth Branagh). . . . "Oleanna" (David Mamet). . . . "The River Wild" (Curtis Hanson). . . . "Eat Drink Man Woman" (Ang Lee; in Mandarin). . . . "The Adventures of Priscilla Queen of the Desert" (Stephan Elliott).

Film Forum 2 and 3, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)—**theatre 2:** A festival of Buster Keaton films. Feb. 15: "Our Hospitality" (1923, Keaton and Jack Blystone). . . . Feb. 16-17: "Three Ages" (1923, Keaton and Eddie Cline), shown with a program of short films starring Roscoe (Fatty) Arbuckle and Keaton. . . . Feb. 18-20: "Seven Chances" (1925, Keaton). . . . Feb. 21-22: "Parlor, Bedroom and Bath" (1931, Edward Sedgwick), shown with a program of two-reelers Keaton made at Columbia Studios. . . . Feb. 23-24: "Doughboys" (1930, Sedgwick) and "Free and Easy" (1930, Sedgwick). . . . Feb. 24: "The King of the Champs-Élysées" (1935, Max Nosseck; in French) and "The Invader" (1936, Adrian Brunel). . . . Feb. 25-27: "Steamboat Bill, Jr." (1928, Charles Reisner). . . . From Feb. 28: "Sidewalks of New York" (1931, Jules White and Zion Myers) and "The Passionate Plumber" (1932, Sedgwick). . . . ¶ Feb. 20 (evening only): Five two-reelers starring Charley Chase. . . . ¶ Feb. 27 (evening only): Five comedy two-reelers shown at this year's Pordenone (Italy) Film Festival. . . . **theatre 3:** "Faster, Pussycat! Kill! Kill!" (1965, Russ Meyer) and "Mamma Roma" (1962, Pier Paolo Pasolini; in Italian).

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—A retrospective of the works of the French writer, producer, and director Marcel Pagnol. Feb. 16 at 2:30 and Feb. 18 at 5: "Angèle" (1934). . . . Feb. 16 at 6: "Harvest" (1937). . . . Feb. 16 at 8:30: "Cigalon" (1935). . . . Feb. 17 at 2:30 and Feb. 23 at 7:30: "Merlusse" (1935). . . . Feb. 17 at 6 and Feb. 20 at 2: "Topaze" (1933). . . . Feb. 17 at 8 and Feb. 19 at 5: "Topaze" (1951). . . . Feb. 18 at 2 and Feb. 23 at 6: "Jofroi" (1933). . . . Feb. 19 at 2 and Feb. 28 at 6: "Letters from My Windmill" (1955). . . . Feb. 20 at 5: "The Well-Digger's Daughter" (†). . . . Feb. 21 at 1:30 and Feb. 24 at 6: "Ugolin" (1952). . . . Feb. 21 and 27 at 6: "Le Schpountz" (1938). . . . Feb. 23 and 28 at 2:30: "The Miller's Beautiful Daughter" (1948). . . . Feb. 24 and 27 at 2:30: "Mr. Poirier's Son-in-Law" (1933). . . . ¶ Feb. 16 at 3 and 6: "A Time Remembered: The Terminal Island Story" (1994, Trevor Greenwood) and "Momiji: Japanese Maple" (1994, Nancy Tatebe). . . . ¶ A series of seven films in which Robert Rossen participated as writer, director, or producer. Feb. 17 at 3: "Johnny O'Clock" (†). . . . Feb. 19 at 2:30 and Feb. 27 at 3: "Body and Soul" (†). . . . Feb. 19 at 5 and Feb. 21 at 3: "All the King's Men" (1949). . . . Feb. 20 at 3 and Feb. 28 at 6: "Lilith" (1964). . . . Feb. 20 at 6 and Feb. 23 at 3: "The Hustler" (1961). . . . Feb. 21 at 6: "The Sea Wolf" (1941). . . . Feb. 24 and 28 at 3: "Alexander the Great" (†). . . . ¶ Three films starring Greta Garbo. Feb. 17 at 6: "A Woman of Affairs" (†). . . . Feb. 17 at 8 and Feb. 18 at 2: "Camille" (1937, George Cukor). . . . Feb. 18 at 5: "Ninotchka" (1939, Ernst Lubitsch). . . . ¶ Feb. 24 at 6:30 and Feb. 25-26 at 2:30 and 5: A program of Massimo Troini films. . . . ¶ The museum will be showing short films nominated for Academy Awards in the animated, live-action, and documentary categories on Feb. 25 and 26 at 2 and 5. . . . ¶ Feb. 27 at 6:30: A program of films by Lynn Kirby, who will be present.

Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level. (875-5600)—Through Feb. 23: A retrospective of films by the Brazilian filmmaker Nelson Pereira dos Santos. All the films are in Portuguese. . . . ¶ Feb. 23 at 6:30 and 9: "Somebody to Love" (1994, Alexandre Rockwell). . . . ¶ From Feb. 24: A program of recent French films selected by the editors and critics of *Cahiers du Cinéma.*

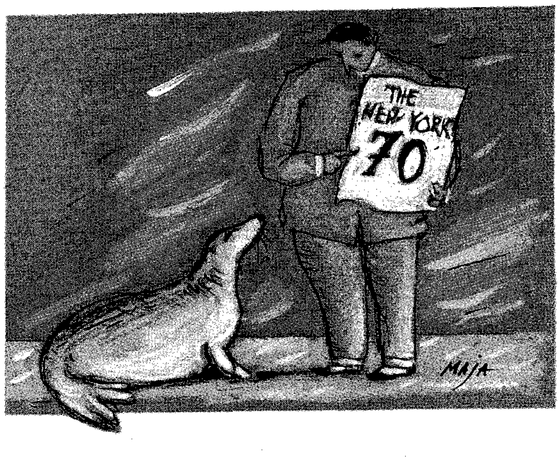
Whitney Museum, Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-0537)—A program of films and videos by, or about, black American males.

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria. (1-718 784-0077)—A program of films starring Shirley Temple. Feb. 18 at 2: "Bright Eyes" (1934, David Butler). . . . Feb. 18 at 4: "Dimples" (1936, William Seiter). . . . Feb. 19 at 2: "The Little Colonel" (1935, Butler). . . . Feb. 19 at 4 and Feb. 20-24 at 2: "The Littlest Rebel" (1935, Butler). . . . Feb. 25 at 2: "Poor Little Rich Girl" (1936, Irving Cummings). . . . Feb. 25 at 4: "Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm" (1938, Allan Dwan). . . . Feb. 26 at 2: "Heidi" (1937, Dwan). . . . Feb. 26 at 4: "Wee Willie Winkie" (1937, John Ford).

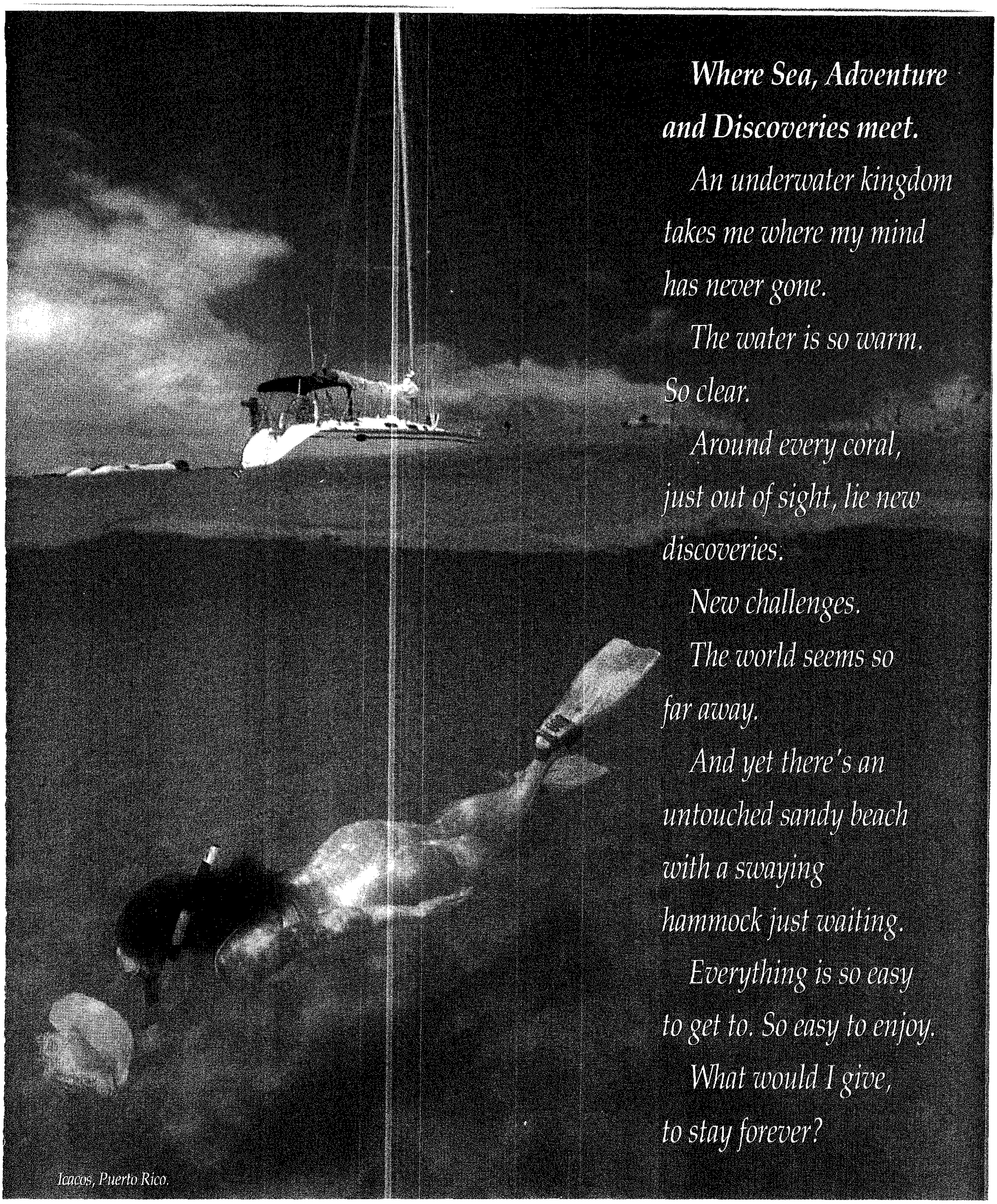
A Different Light Bookstore, 151 W. 19th St. (989-4850)—A Sunday-night series of free films (and popcorn). On Feb. 19 at 7, the feature will be Ian Fleming's "Goldfinger" (1963, Guy Hamilton), with Sean Connery, Gert Frobe, and Honor Blackman. . . . ¶ On Feb. 26 at 7, the feature will be Matt Crowley's "Boys in the Band" (1970, William Friedkin).

Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—Feb. 21 at 12:30, 3:15, 6, and 8:45: "L'Enfer" (1993, Claude Chabrol; in French). . . . ¶ Feb. 28 at 12:30, 3:15, 6, and 8:45: "François Truffaut: Stolen Portraits" (1993, Serge Toubiana and Michel Pascal; in French), a documentary.

Anthology Film Archives, 32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (505-5181)—Feb. 17 at 8: Thirteen short films by Robert Breer. . . . ¶ Feb. 18 at 4: Various reels from "The Visual Diary of Yasunori Yamamoto.". . . ¶ Feb. 18 at 7:30: "Une Femme Douce" (1969, Robert Bresson; in French). . . . ¶ Feb. 18 at 9:30: "Scenes from Under Childhood" (1970, Stan Brakhage). . . . ¶ Feb. 19 at 6: A program of seven short films by Brakhage. . . . ¶ Feb. 19 at 8 and Feb. 25 at 6: "Shadows of Our Forgotten Ancestors" (1964, Sergei Paradjanov; in Russian). . . . ¶ Feb. 23-24 at 8 and Feb. 25-26 at 4: Short films by Brakhage, Paradjanov, and others. . . . ¶ Feb. 25 at 2: "Victory in the Ukraine" (1945, Aleksandr Dovzhenko; in Russian). . . . ¶ Feb. 25 at 8: "The Text of Light" (1974, Brakhage; silent). . . . ¶ Feb. 26 at 6: Three short films by James Broughton. . . . ¶ Feb. 26 at 8: "The Spanish Earth" (1937, Joris Ivens) and "Salt of the Earth" (†).



DANIEL MAJA



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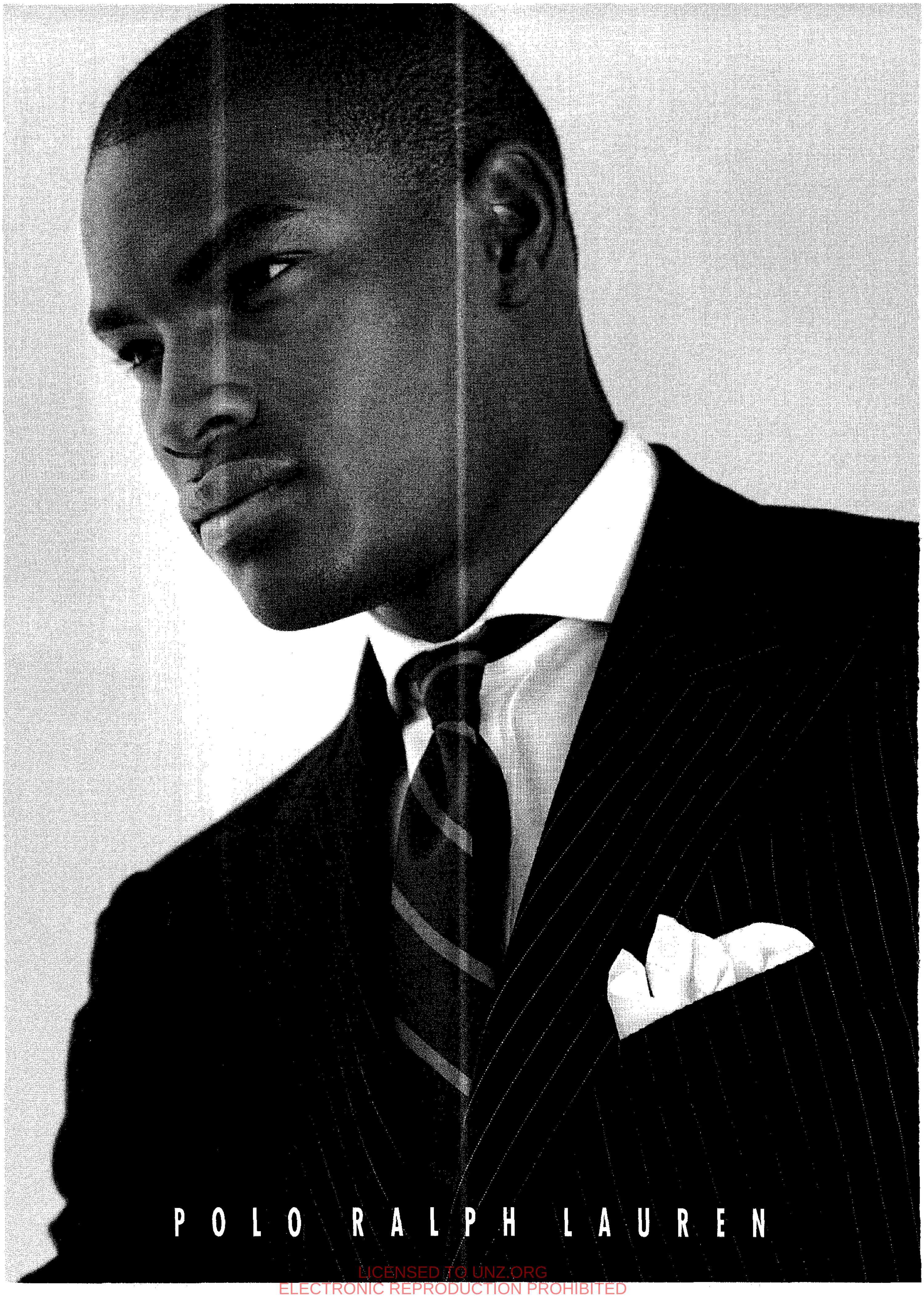
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THE TALK OF THE TOWN

A TALE OF TWO CITIES

THE New York to which Harold Ross introduced this magazine in 1925 was radically different from the businesslike, puritanical city of today. It was wide open, with scores of night clubs and thousands of speakeasies, gambling joints, and houses of prostitution. Politically, it was run by Tammany Hall, which presided over a corrupt municipal government, a corrupt police force, and a corrupt judiciary. Tammany had long controlled the operations of the local Democratic Party and was openly contemptuous of the handful of do-gooding spoilsports—Episcopal bishops and the like—who went about dolorously preaching reform. Why tinker with a system that made so many people rich and happy, by no matter what illegal means? To both visitors and a surprisingly large number of residents, New York in the twenties was a kind of premature Vegas, where one stayed up all night, spent lots of money, and rubbed shoulders with armed gangsters, who in many cases owned the premises that one was grateful to be permitted to enter.

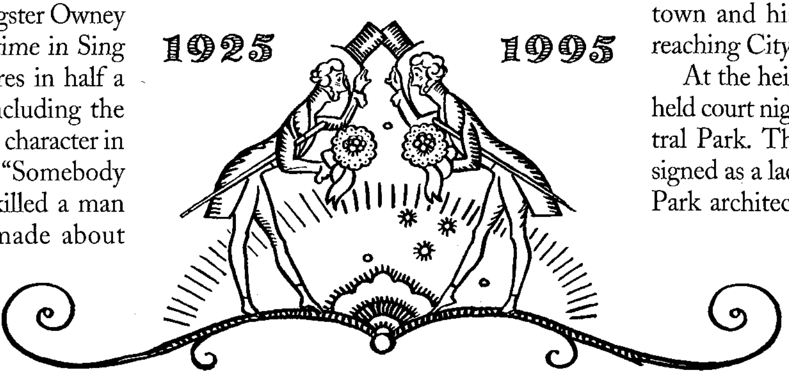
Also in 1925, F. Scott Fitzgerald's novel "The Great Gatsby" was published. It was widely surmised that Gatsby was modelled in part on the gangster Owney Madden, who had served time in Sing Sing, and who owned shares in half a dozen local night clubs, including the Cotton Club, in Harlem. A character in the novel says of Gatsby, "Somebody told me they thought he killed a man once"—a remark often made about Madden, and with good reason. Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald were conspicuous members of the hard-drinking speakeasy-and-night-club set, and it was characteristic of the period that the Fitzgeralds, gently brought up in cities remote from New York (Scott in St. Paul, Zelda in Montgomery), were eager to take big chances here in the gorgeous East, where excess seemed to them and their companions the embodiment of romance.

AMONG the Fitzgeralds' companions were Robert Benchley, Dorothy Parker, and Marc Connelly, who, like them, had learned to put aside conventional family backgrounds and give themselves up to New York City's harum-scarum ways. Speakeasies—especially one called Tony's, on West Fifty-second Street—became their home away from home. The offices of the best-edited New York newspaper of the day, the *Herald Tribune*, were on West Forty-first Street, adjacent to a speakeasy run by John Bleeck. Harold Ross recruited many of the early writers for his magazine from the *Tribune*, which is to say from Bleeck's.

The most famous of all such erstwhile speakeasies is "21," which from 1920 until 1925 was situated in a house in Greenwich Village. It was called the Red Head, and then Jack & Charlie's, after its proprietors, Jack Kriendler and Charlie Berns. When it moved uptown, to 42 West Forty-ninth Street, it became the Forty-two Club; in 1930, it moved to its present quarters, at 21 West Fifty-second Street. Ross, Benchley, Wolcott Gibbs, Peter Arno, and Charles Addams were all regulars there. Pete Kriendler, Jack's younger brother, is, at almost ninety years old, a daily presence at "21." He remembers Ross as being "dour," and says, "There was a lot of the Scot in him. Besides, he had ulcers. He had bottles of pills scattered all over the table." As for Benchley, he was, Kriendler says, "the world's friend, loved by everybody."

Late in 1925, James J. Walker, universally known as Jimmy, was elected mayor of New York. The son of an Irish-Catholic Tammany stalwart, Walker was in his early forties when he became mayor; slender, nattily dressed, a gifted orator and failed actor, he had written the lyrics of a perennially popular song, "Will You Love Me in December as You Do in May?" He was the ideal Tammany puppet, letting others direct the flow of graft and picking up his own gifts of money (he called them "beneficences") with a disarming lack of adequate concealment. He was always ready with a wisecrack—he once defined a reformer as "a guy who rides through a sewer in a glass-bottomed boat"—and he spent his nights on the town and his mornings asleep, never reaching City Hall before noon.

At the height of his success, Walker held court nightly in the Casino in Central Park. The building had been designed as a ladies' retreat by the original Park architect, Calvert Vaux, and had long been under lease as an inexpensive restaurant of no particular distinction. A Walker buddy, Sidney Solomon, asked



REA IRVIN

for it as a political payoff, promising to turn it into the most glamorous night club in town. Walker arranged the deal, and Solomon hired Joseph Urban, a Viennese-born architect and stage designer (his handiwork included the annual "Ziegfeld Follies"), to carry out the transformation, at a cost of almost half a million dollars. It was indeed a splendiferous confection, where liquor and women were readily available, where Eddie Duchin and his band played, and where a private upstairs salon served the Mayor as a handy place to do business.

Walker was elected to a second term in 1929, shortly after the stock-market crash that spelled the beginning of the end of New York City's Age of Fun. Along with the Depression came the first victories of the reform movement. Walker was forced to resign from office in 1932 and retire to Europe. His successor as mayor, Fiorello LaGuardia, was opposed to frivolity in any form—he closed the burlesque houses, drove the organ-grinders off the streets, and encouraged his Parks Commissioner, Robert Moses, to demolish the Central Park Casino. Where it stood is today an empty terrace, a couple of hundred feet south of Seventy-second Street just off the East Drive: in the intensity of its bleak bareness, a monument to the puritanism of the city we have become.

MESSAGE THERAPY

NOT so very long ago, during civilization's golden age, most people were afraid of telephone-answering machines. A typical phone message from that era: "Uh—hello? I don't know. These machines. It's Mother—uh"—*click*.

Nowadays, of course, such trepidation seems laughably quaint. Modern callers, without the icy silence of a live, human listener on the other end to inhibit them, have no sense of restraint. A typical message from today:

"Dear, I've got to run out for the rest of the morning, but before I do I want to let you know that your father and I got to talking over dinner last night—at that Italian place we took you to the last time you were here, that you hated?—and until that very moment I don't think I realized how very strongly we both feel that this idea of packing up those darling children and plunking them down for an entire year in a foreign country, for God's sake, where you don't know a single soul, has got to be the last thing on earth that either of you ought to be thinking about right now, especially when your career is finally beginning to look a little bit less—well, tenuous. And I know you don't want your nosy old mother poking around in your business, but I just suddenly realized that I would never feel right about myself if I didn't at least try to make . . ."

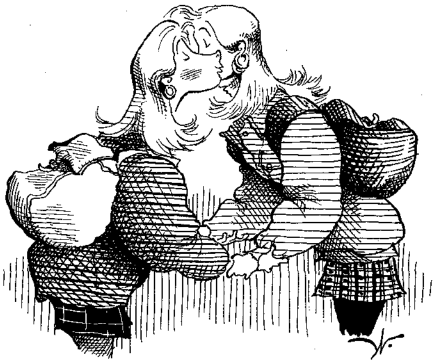
OF course, there are a few frightened holdouts—some callers still hang up when a machine answers, just as some machine owners still record lengthy outgoing messages filled with anachronistically detailed instructions. Some people even still use *humorous* outgoing messages, but for the most part the comedic energy that was once spent on creating these is now used for customizing fax cover sheets, shopping for computer screen savers, and chuckling over E-mail emoticons.

A handful of exceptions notwithstanding, the world is worse than it was, and there is no reason to expect that it will improve. Nowadays, a live, human telephone answerer is likely to provoke an eerily familiar response: "Uh—oh. Hello, dear. Uh—I was expecting your machine."

THE SHIT-KICKERS OF MADISON AVENUE

THE tenth graders heading up Madison Avenue at 7:30 A.M. to the private high schools are freshly liberated from their dental braces, and their teeth look pearly and magnificent. They are fifteen years old. During the week, they arrive, by bus or on foot, singly or in pairs or in clusters, and they make their way up the west side of Madison—they call it the "cool" side—toward their schools: Dalton, on East Eighty-ninth; Sacred Heart and Spence, on East Ninety-first; Nightingale-Bamford, on East Ninety-second; the Lycée Français, on East Ninety-fifth. Brearley and Chapin are farther east; Collegiate, Columbia Prep, and Trinity are in the west; Browning is south; Horace Mann, Riverdale, and Fieldston are in the north. On the weekends, the tenth graders from all points will find a way to get together. Today is only Tuesday.

Boys and girls spill out of the Eighty-sixth Street crosstown buses at Madison Avenue and join the flow of their counterparts heading north. The walking tenth graders greet one another in soft, kindly rhythms, in polite, gentle tones. The boys greet one another with high fives. Girls with girls and girls with boys bestow quick, sweet kisses on one another's cheeks—some cheeks still not completely rid of hints of baby fat. No routine air kisses from these kids. Their kisses are heartfelt, making their unity, their devotion to and trust in one another, palpable. Kisses from their mouths are like the cool little first nippy smacks of a very young baby.



MOST of the tenth graders are in the habit of leaving home without eating any breakfast. Still in clusters, with fifteen minutes to get to school, they pause in doorways. One girl in a cluster of five takes out a pack of Marlboro Lights—the brand favored at the moment—and each member of the cluster participates in lighting the cigarette, striking the match, guarding the flame, offering a propane lighter. They share. The lighted cigarette is passed from mouth to mouth. They all inhale, the girls twisting their mouths like tough pros, exhaling the smoke from a tiny corner opening on one side of the lips.

One angelic-looking blond beauty with raw, red nostrils takes a puff, inhales deeply, and says wearily, "I've like got the fucking flu or something."

"Fuck the you know fucking germs," another one says smoothly, reassuringly, a positive reinforcer.

"I got home like three?" another member of the cluster says, making her statement in the form of a question. "I sweat Henry? Who you sweat? Anybody?"

The others regard her skeptically. "Nobody," one says.

"I sweat the shit out of Henry," the one

ILLUSTRATIONS BY MICHAEL WITTE

are at the ready on every ble. A teen-age Al Pacino-look-alike waiter serves them their first meal of the day: lone platters of ketchup-doused French fries or fried onion rings, or combo French fries and onion rings, and Cokes. A late arrival, dark-eyed, and smaller and chubbier than the ones settled in, turns up, and a place is found for her. Tearfully, she reports that her French teacher sprang a surprise test on her class, and she thinks she did badly on it.

"Don't like get fucking stressed out," a girl says, offering that same kindly positive reinforcement.

"Fucking teachers," a companion says, chewing on a fry and simultaneously taking a drag on a cigarette and passing it on. "I'm on my way you know to lunch, and the fucking teacher asks where I'm going?" The statements continue to sound as though they were questions. "I don't want teachers being like into my you know business?"

"I miss the teacher who used to be a model and then left the school and went to Africa to be a nun?" someone says. "She would like talk you know about her experiences? She was very like open to everybody? The others at the table [illegible] girls at all the other tables agree that they miss the teacher who went to Africa to be a nun.

One of the girls, very pretty, with long dark hair, is "presenting" a party and hands out printed invitations. She has dark glasses pushed up on top of her hair. She wears silver loop earrings, a double in the left ear, a single in the right. At her throat hangs a large wooden cross. The invitation shows a picture of Stonehenge on one side, and the other side has a long list of names of people supporting the party, which has a title: "The Farside."

"I can't go to the party?" one of the [illegible] me? Because I was smoking?"

"My mom is trying to like ship me off to a fucking school in fucking Spain?" another girl says. "Unless I you know quit smoking?"

"I want to quit, but I can't? I don't have a choice? It's too late?" one fatalist says.

The party entrepreneur explains that she is working with six other presenters to spread the invitations around, to telephone friends at the schools to the east, west, north, and south, and to obtain the services of a really topnotch d.j. They are working with a well-to-do party producer, whose take of the proceeds will be forty per cent, the balance to be divided evenly among the seven presenters. Admission to the party will be twelve dollars per person.

"This rich, older guy is like experienced you know?" she says. "He's twenty-nine?"

The mention of the number draws forth gasps.

"Fucking twenty-nine," one of the girls says. "That's the age of those actors in that mindless '90210' or that mindless 'Melrose Place.' They're twenty-nine, and they're like playing our age."

At any rate, there are plans to be

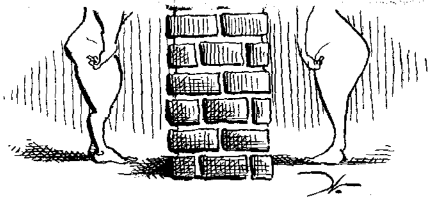
THE SOCIAL LIFE

It is not always easy
To pass the time of day
To nod to an acquaintance
Or find something to say—
Sometimes I look away.

—SAMUEL MENASHE

FROM THE NEW YORKER, DECEMBER 3, 1949.

weekend, promptly at 12:36 P.M., the tenth graders are back in place at Jackson Hole, smoking, chewing gum, eating fries and onion rings, and reviewing the party. "I like feel real ripped off?" the young Farside presenter-entrepreneur is saying. "Too many people came to the party, which was at this nice club on West Forty-seventh Street? There were hundreds pushing and shoving and clogging the street, and the police came? And they said we had to be carded, because they had a bar? And we you know didn't like have cards, so this twenty-nine-year-old rich guy said the fee for getting the club had to be raised from three thousand dollars to eight thousand dollars, because they had to close the bar and were not allowed you know to sell us drinks? And everybody had to pay twenty dollars instead of twelve dollars just to get in? So, but even so, nobody like wanted to leave? And it was so crowded you couldn't even dance? And at the end of it the twenty-nine-year-old rich guy took forty per cent, and all I got was about fifty fucking dollars, after I did all the fucking work and made a million phone calls?"



She chews on a French fry, accepts a it in hope. But its nearly six hundred and fifty heartfelt entries—post-"Animal House" definitions of the new terminology for safe-sex and non-sex and post-sex situations, along with forty-three illustrations, thirty-nine photographs, and five hundred and seventy-two source notes—lead further into the abyss:

"*Standing too close.* 'Standing too close' is one of a long list of 'sexually harassing behaviors' that Susan Strauss and Pamela Espeland caution us have been 'reported in U.S. high schools.' See also: *Dancing too close; Touching.*"

A CONFERENCE call with the co-authors, Henry Beard and Christopher Cerf, both formerly of *National Lampoon:*

REPORTER: Do you think there's a point to living, now that sex is out of the question?

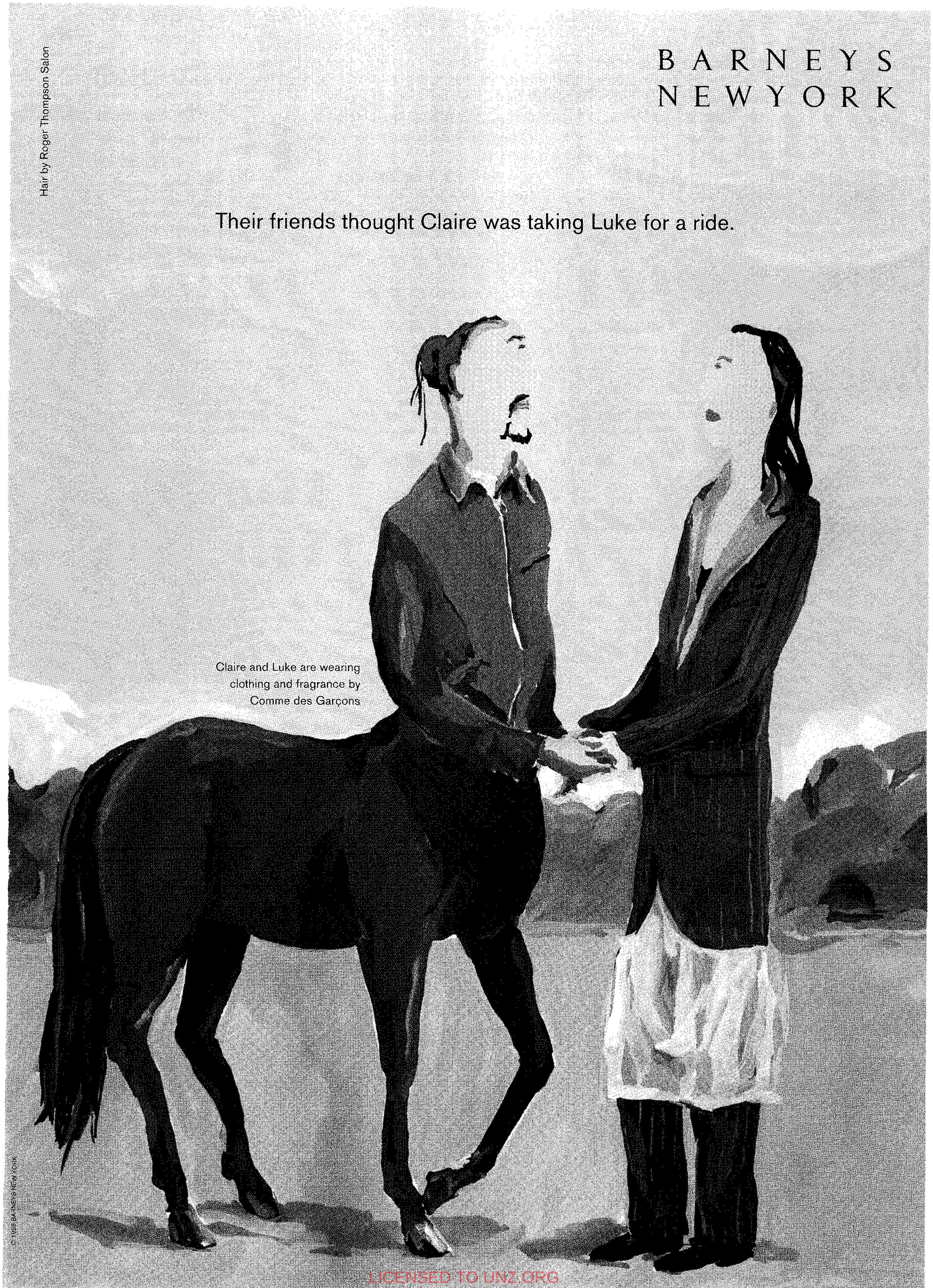
the nub of this matter here. [illegible] astating effect it's had on our future.

C.C. (*in the background*): Auto-euthanasia or voluntary death.

H.B.: Auto-euthanasia or voluntary death. And people who are suicidal are spiritually dysfunctional. (*Pause.*) But voluntary death or auto-euthanasia, is this an option? Is this recommended? *We* certainly wouldn't. But, golly, these are tough times.

CITY HALL WAYS

WHEN New York's City Hall was finished, in 1812, and Mayor DeWitt Clinton moved in, New York City consisted almost entirely of the south end of Manhattan, from the Battery to a few blocks north of the new seat of government. Even today, it often seems that people who work and in some cases live in that area move about as if it were a small city unto itself. City Hall, with the paved walks and patches of greenery around it—along with an annex, Boss Tweed's once grand and famously costly courthouse—extends from Chambers


BARNEYS
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Hair by Roger Thompson Salon
Their friends thought Claire was taking Luke for a ride.
Claire and Luke are wearing
clothing and fragrance by
Comme des Garçons
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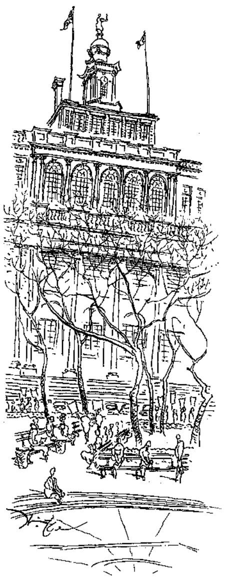
Street to Park Row between Broadway and Centre Street. The Municipal Building, where many city agencies and commissioners have their offices, is across Centre Street from City Hall, and you can cut through it to Police Headquarters. Just to the north on Centre Street are Foley Square and the county, state, and federal courthouses, where large crowds have often stood in line in the hope of getting into what they thought of as sensational trials in the pre-O. J. days.

Just south of the federal courthouse is the United States Attorney's Office, which was Rudolph Giuliani's domain before he started running for mayor. It took two elections and fifteen million dollars to move him a block and a half. Next to his old office is the Metropolitan Correctional Center—that is, the federal jail. (Poets incarcerated there would presumably write "The Ballad of the Metropolitan Correctional Center.") Friends and relatives sometimes stand on the street and shout encouraging messages up to inmates, and the inmates sometimes shout down. Among the notable prisoners have been John Gotti, Ivan Boesky, and Joe Doherty, a member of the Irish Republican Army who was caught here after escaping from a jail in Northern Ireland while on trial for the murder of a British soldier (he was later convicted in absentia). Doherty spent most of his time in this country at the Correctional Center, before finally being deported, in 1992, but he was considered such a personage that in 1990, by resolution of the City Council, a corner near the jail was named Joe Doherty Corner.



The town square of this far-downtown unofficial city is the space in front of City Hall, particularly the broad concrete plaza between the front steps and the small City Hall Park, to the south. The area has a portentous provenance: there, on July 9, 1776, George Washington and his officers sat on horseback listening intently as a lieutenant read aloud the Declaration of Independence, which had just arrived by courier from Philadelphia. What goes on there is not always of historic significance, however. Visiting celebrities push good causes—and slow-selling CDs. There are frequent musical events: jazz, classical, supper music, salsa (much bigger than it used to be). City-sponsored recreation programs have their day (or noon hour), often with the mayor briefly in attendance. Last summer, Mayor Giuliani got great credit for executing a passable Double Dutch during a schoolchildren's jump-rope exhibition.

Right now, since, as usual, it's budget-crisis time in the city, there are almost daily rallies on the plaza denouncing Giuliani for his proposed slashing of programs for the poor and funds for the schools. So far, though, he hasn't been hanged in effigy there, as some of his predecessors were. A generation ago, John Lindsay, the last Republican mayor before Giuliani, got the treatment several times. On one occasion, his twin brother, David, was on the phone in the Mayor's office when the figure of a mock-hanging victim swung by the window. "Somebody is being hanged in effigy, Dave," the Mayor said to him, "and I don't know how to tell you this, but it looks like you."

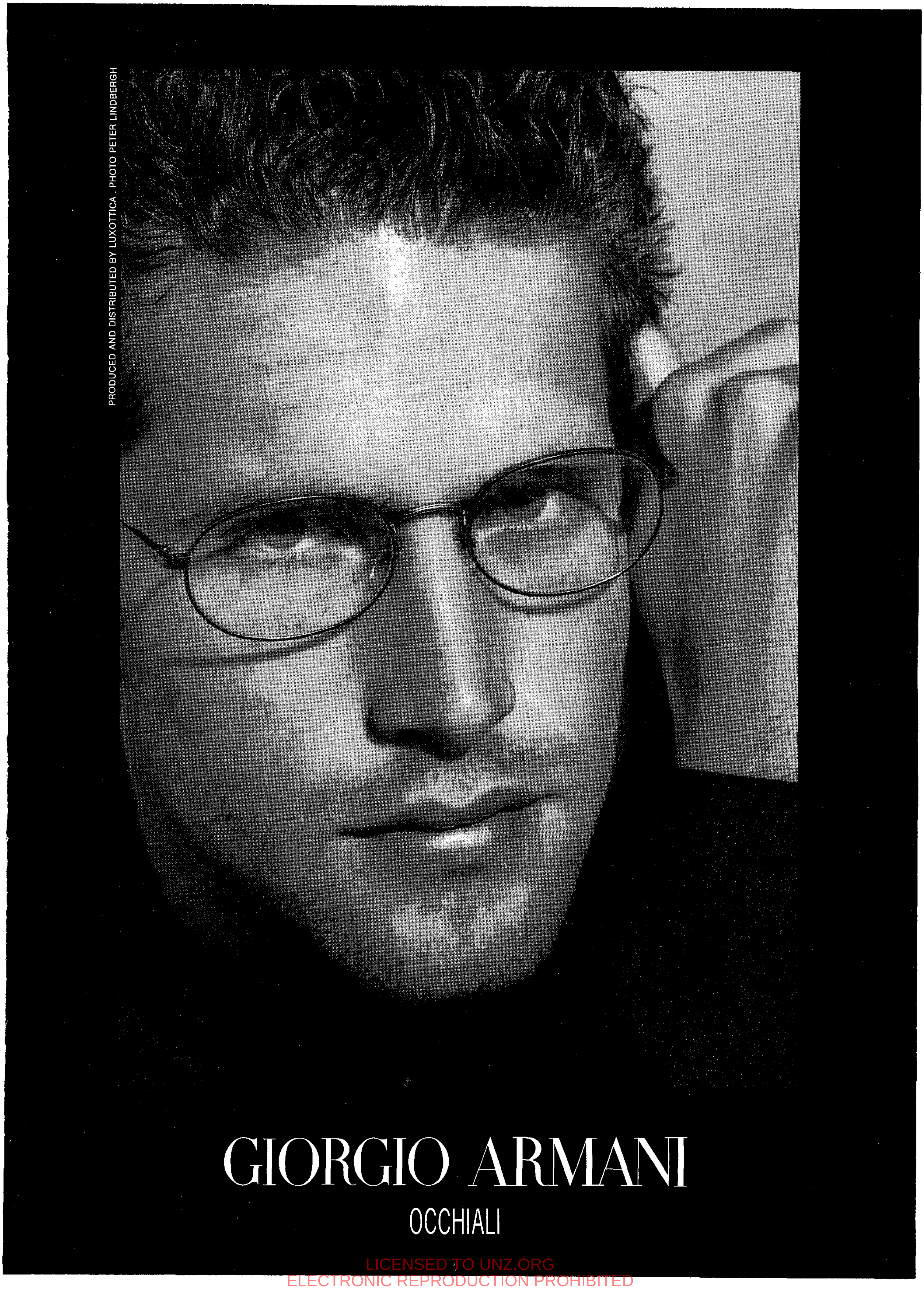
These days, a grisly effigy figure would not swing so close to the mayor's window. A few years ago, most large demonstrations were pushed south into City Hall Park. In fact, on warm days it can be quite pleasant in the park, since there is often a cooling breeze from the Delacorte Fountain. The donor, whose family had immigrated from Russia, contributed two other fountains to the city, as well as the Alice in Wonderland statue, the clock with the dancing animals, and the Delacorte Theatre, all in Central Park. In a city where many people are not exactly what they seem, he clearly felt at home. Once when he was asked why he had changed his name to one ending in "Jr.," he explained, "When your name is George T. Delacorte, Jr., no one asks what your name was before it was George T. Delacorte, Jr."—a more practical philosophy than is often heard inside or outside City Hall.

OSBORNE'S ANGER

Last month, John Osborne, who died in December, was outed by a fellow actor-playwright, Anthony Creighton, with whom he collaborated on "Epitaph for George Dillon" and to whom he dedicated "The Entertainer." Creighton produced letters that document his long-running affair with Osborne (who nicknamed him Mouse), dating back to the early fifties, before Osborne's first hit or his first marriage, when they were both rep actors, and continuing on and off until his third marriage. (Osborne later referred to Creighton in his outrageous autobiography, "Almost a Gentleman," as a "cadging, homosexual drunk.")

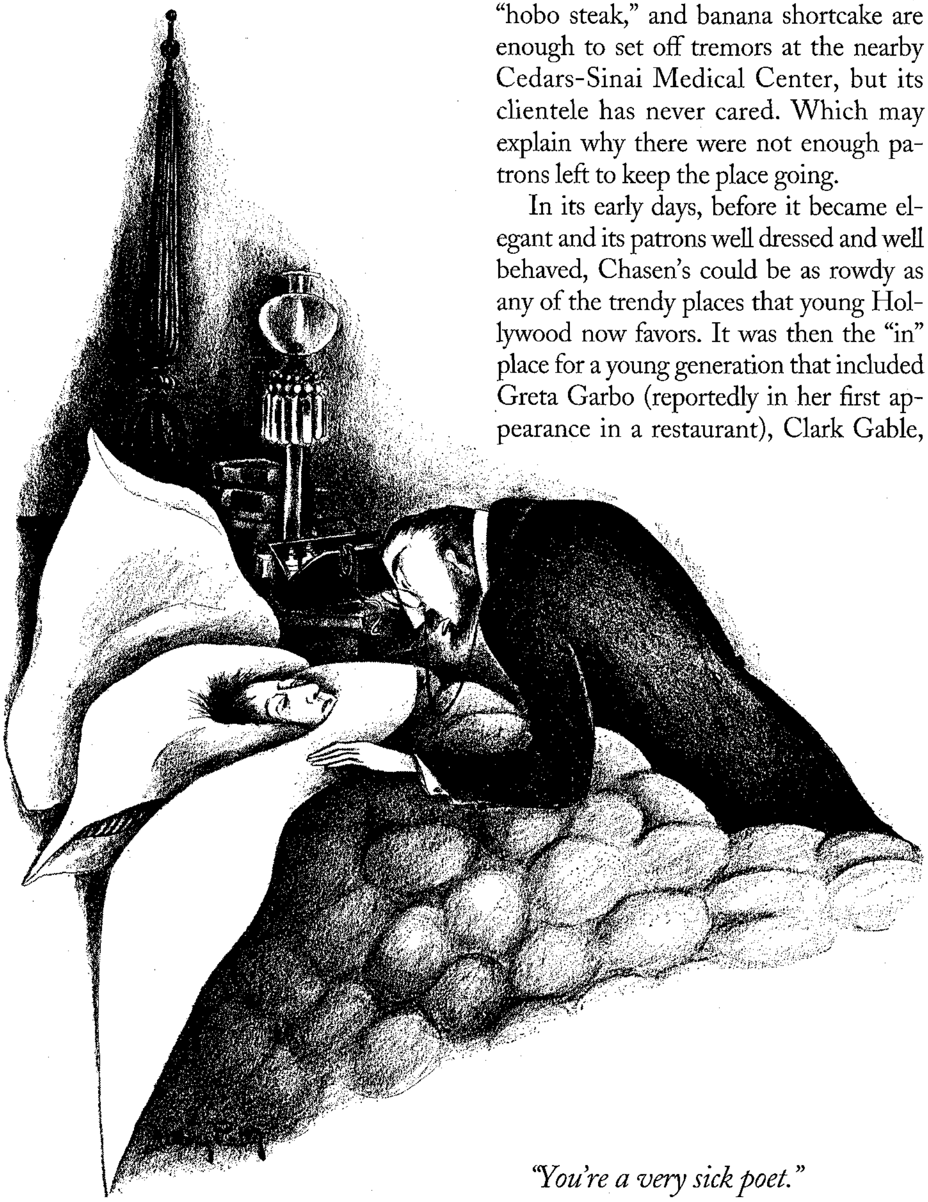
The news that Osborne had had a relationship with Creighton was an ironic footnote to the bleat of impotence disguised as heroic hectoring that Osborne called his "throw-away vehemence." The invective in plays like "Look Back in Anger," "The Entertainer," and "Inadmissible Evidence" turned Osborne into a cultural icon, the first of the many Angry Young Men of the British theatre. The outcry was not a call to social action but a self-hypnotic show of strength in a becalmed postwar Britain. Osborne used his talent to abuse, to browbeat his two favorite targets: homosexuals ("They are uniformly bitchy, envious, self-seeking, fickle and usually without passion," one of his characters declares, in "Time Present") and women.

Onstage, Osborne constantly baited the opposite sex, but he was even more vitriolic about women offstage. "How bitter is lovelessness both to suffer and inflict," he wrote in "Almost a Gentleman." He was married five times, and he reserved some of his most acid thoughts for his ex-wives. He described Wife No. 2, the actress Mary Ure, throwing herself drunk and naked into a West Los Angeles swimming pool while Osborne and the director Tony Richardson sat talking. "Perhaps she's gone *under*," Richardson said, after they heard a splash in the pool followed by a si-


PRODUCED AND DISTRIBUTED BY LUXOTTICA . PHOTO PETER LINDBERGH
GIORGIO ARMANI
OCCHIALI

lence. "Let her drown," Osborne said. "Have another drink." (Ure *was* drowning, and Richardson pulled her out of the water.) Wife No. 3, the late film critic and novelist Penelope Gilliatt, was mocked for her "fretful, incontinent ambition," and dismissed as a "swot." But Osborne saved his purest hate for the actress Jill Bennett, Wife No. 4, whom he called Adolf, and who committed suicide in 1990. "I have only one regret remaining now in this matter of Adolf," he wrote. "It is simply that I was unable to look down upon her open coffin and, like that bird in the Book of Tobit, drop a good, large mess in her eye."

Anthony Trollope said that it is "deep honesty that distinguishes a gentleman." Osborne, as the title of his autobiography slyly admits, was holding something back from the public spectacle he made of himself. Hypocrisy is what he told the world that he was levelling his fury at. After "Inadmissible Evidence" (1964), he never had another hit, and the revelation of his affair with Creighton indicates what some had already guessed from the stalemated rancor of Osborne's theatrical voice: that the hypocrite he wanted to murder was himself. "There is so much dread," he said.



"You're a very sick poet."

FROM THE NEW YORKER, JUNE 17, 1939.

CHASEN'S FADEOUT

THE barbarians at the studio gates are closing down Chasen's, a restaurant that has meant to Hollywood what Maxim's has to Paris and "21" to New York. It will be replaced by—what else?—a vast shopping center. Times change, but Chasen's hasn't. Its heart-stopping chili, salt-encrusted buttery "hobo steak," and banana shortcake are enough to set off tremors at the nearby Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, but its clientele has never cared. Which may explain why there were not enough patrons left to keep the place going.

In its early days, before it became elegant and its patrons well dressed and well behaved, Chasen's could be as rowdy as any of the trendy places that young Hollywood now favors. It was then the "in" place for a young generation that included Greta Garbo (reportedly in her first appearance in a restaurant), Clark Gable, Charlie Chaplin, W. C. Fields, Humphrey Bogart, James Cagney, Howard Hughes, Spencer Tracy, and Alfred Hitchcock. Surviving regulars include Ronald Reagan, Bob Hope, and Lew Wasserman.

None of the above would have had a Chasen's to go to but for the conviction of the founding editor of this magazine, Harold Ross, that his friend Dave Chasen was a better cook than comic stooge. Oddly, Chasen was a foil for a comedian named Joe Cook, who regularly struck him with a hammer in the course of his act. This job did not strike Ross as a promising launch for a career in show business. He was more impressed by the chili and barbecued ribs that Chasen dispensed one night at Cook's weekend house. "If you ever decide to get out of show business and earn an honest living as a chef, I'll stake you to a restaurant," Ross said.

WHEN Cook's health failed, and Chasen was looking for work in Hollywood, Ross followed through on his promise. His thirty-five-hundred-dollar investment enabled Chasen to build a nondescript structure in a beanfield on Los Angeles's Beverly Boulevard and start the Southern Pit Barbecue, in 1936. Ross sent out the word to writers who were in exile in Hollywood to pick up movie money—Robert Benchley, Nunnally Johnson, James Thurber, Howard Lindsay, Russel Crouse, Alexander Woollcott, Charles MacArthur. They created the necessary buzz, and the studio crowd soon followed.

Maude Chasen, Dave Chasen's soignée Southern widow, says that the memorabilia of the Dave Chasen years are not for sale. But something that might have been priceless disappeared years ago. A well-documented story has it that James Thurber left his table for several hours and covered every inch of the walls of the men's room with drawings. Chasen was overjoyed, and planned to have the walls varnished to preserve them. The next morning, however, a cleaning woman proudly reported, "Some drunk scribbled all over the walls in there, Mr. Chasen, but I worked all night and washed 'em off." ♦

This week's contributors: Brendan Gill, David Owen, Lillian Ross, Alison Rose, Andy Logan, John Lahr, David Brown.

weather or not
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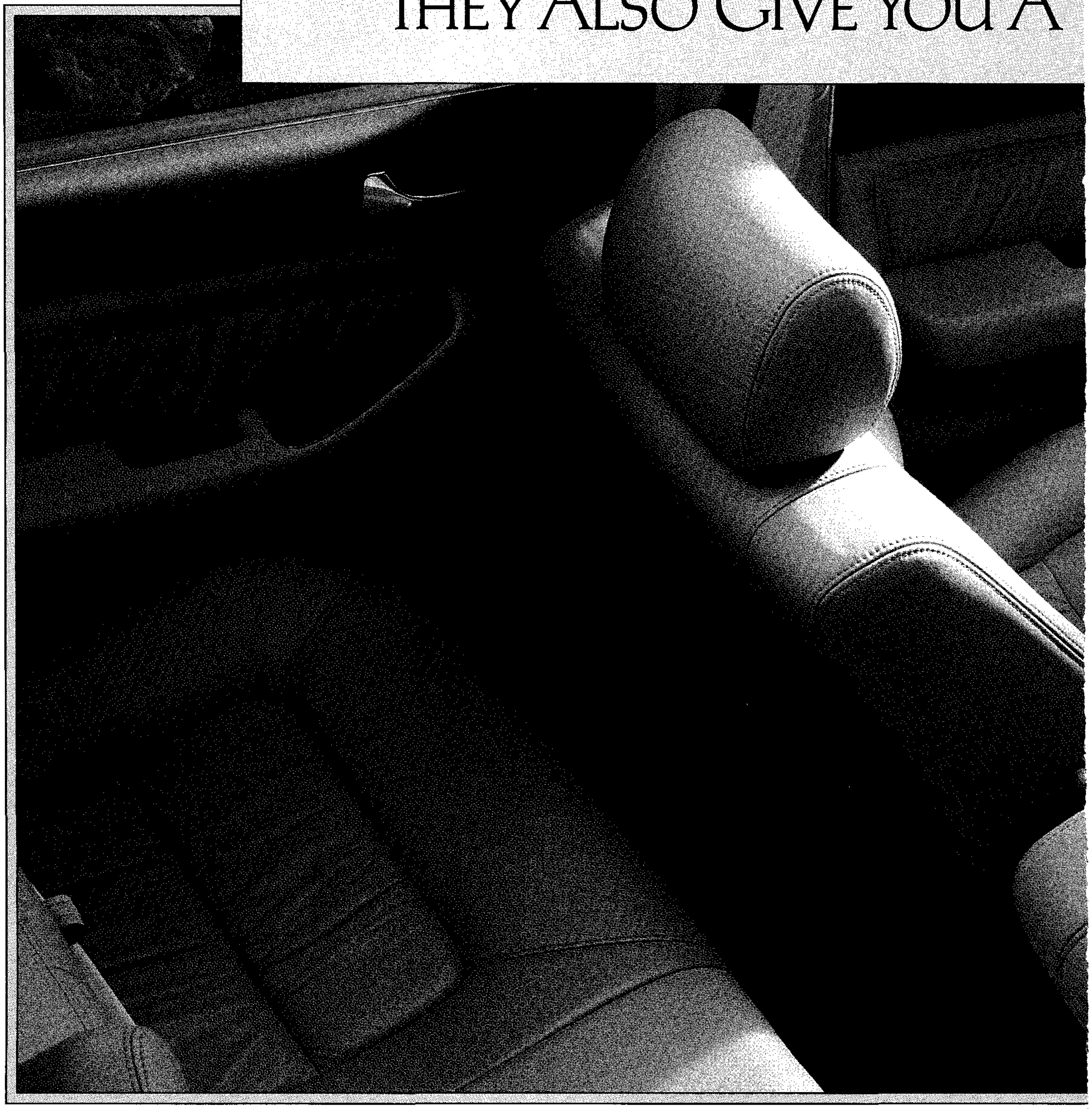

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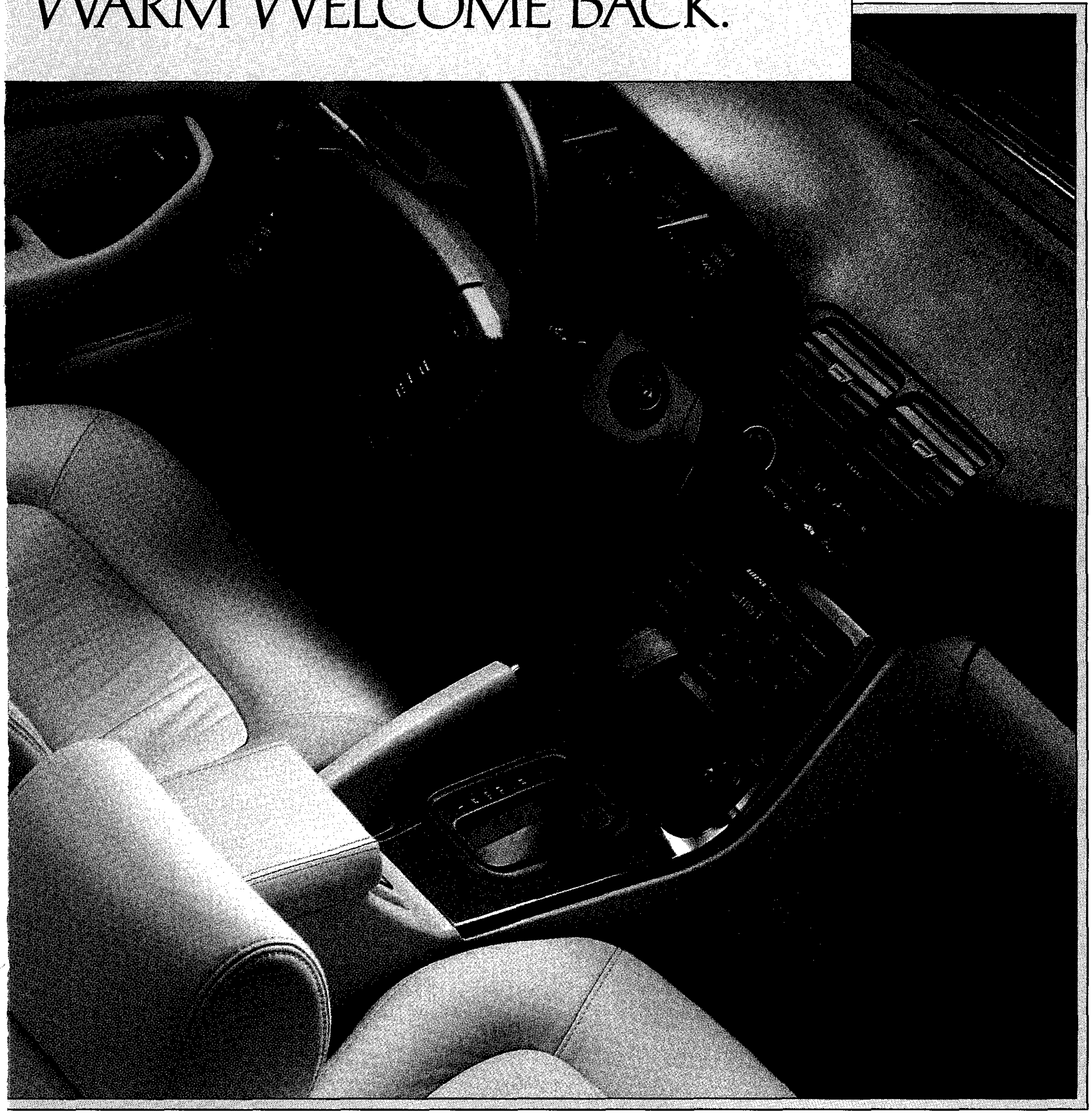

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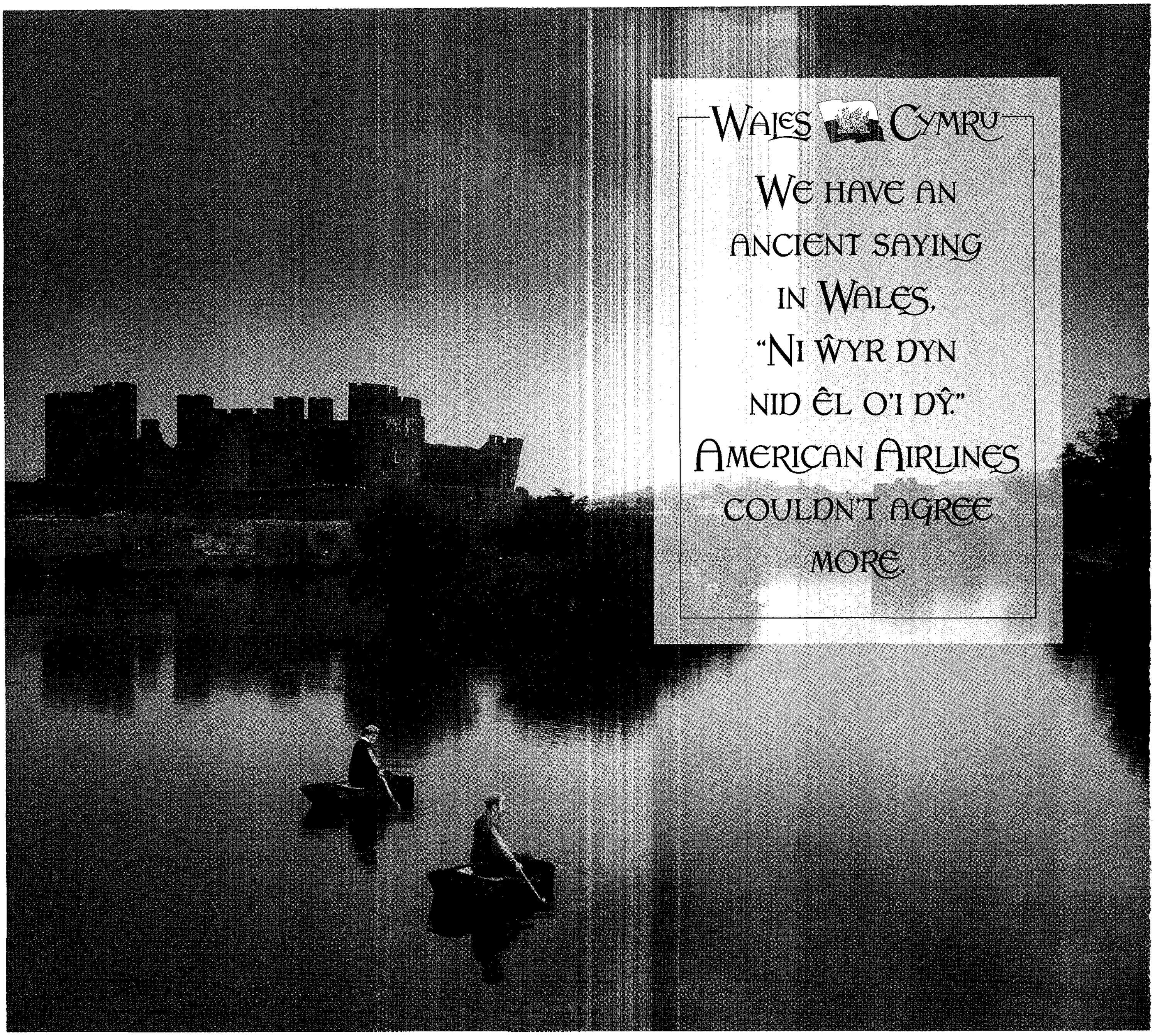
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LIFE IN THE CITY

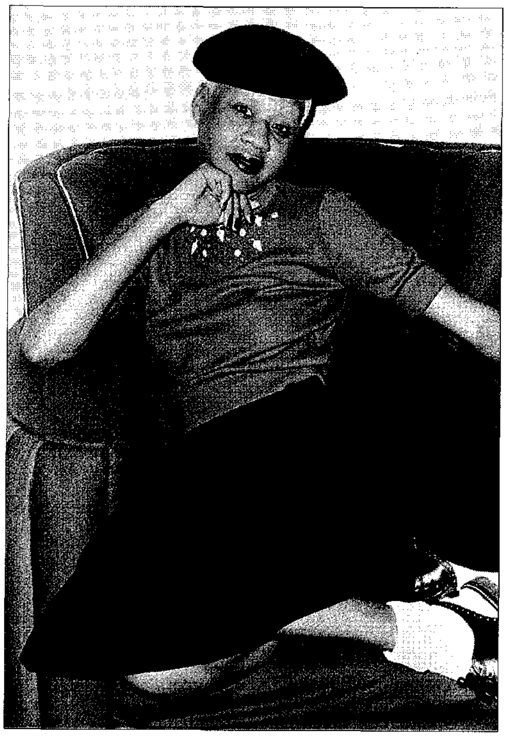
PUTTING MYSELF TOGETHER

Somehow, the writer, and her favorite hat, survived the heady days and nights of youth.

BY JAMAICA KINCAID

LAST Halloween, my daughter—her name is Annie; she is ten years old—decided that the scary person she wanted to impersonate was the Countess Dracula, and so, without even knowing whether there ever was such a creature, I set out to make her a costume. I bought yards of gray and black lace, some black satin ribbon, and black thread. I stitched the black and gray lace together by hand to make a cape, and ran the black satin ribbon through a hem I had made along the neckline. The cape pleased her very much: I could see that from the way she twisted and turned while standing in front of the looking glass. Underneath the cape she wore an old black dress of mine that I had grown too fat to fit into any longer. She painted her face white, then blackened the area around her eyes with a pencil made for that purpose, drew long lines of red from the corner of her mouth to under her chin with my lipstick, and colored her lips with lipstick of another shade.

She also wore a hat—a black hat, made of corded velvet, that was flat and round, like a dinner plate. It had a tassel in the center—a piece of the corded velvet that had been deliberately unravelled by its maker. There was an elastic band that ran from one side to the other and was worn under the chin or tucked under the hairline in back, for anchoring the hat on the head. My daughter wore the band tucked under a bun I had made of her hair in the back. She did not scare anyone; she looked very beautiful. My daughter lives in a small village in a small state, and, when she stepped out to trick-or-treat, the neighbors greeted her with enthusiasm. Her hat, especially, was admired.



Hat trick: Jamaica Kincaid in her mid-twenties.

COURTESY OF JAMAICA KINCAID

That hat was one I used to wear all the time. I bought it at a store that sold old clothes, but I cannot remember if it was a store called Early Halloween and owned by a woman named Joyce, or a store called Harriet Love and owned by a woman named Harriet Love, or a store whose name I can't remember but which was owned by a woman named Enid. This was many years ago; I must have been twenty-five when I bought it, because I remember wearing it on my twenty-sixth birthday. I was born in 1949. My twenty-sixth birthday was the birthday when I felt old and used up—I had left home when I was sixteen, and ten years in a young life is a long time—and someone had taken me to dinner at a restaurant called the SoHo Charcuterie. While eating some absurd combination of food (or so it then struck me; no doubt it would seem quite ordinary now), I wondered aloud whether, at my

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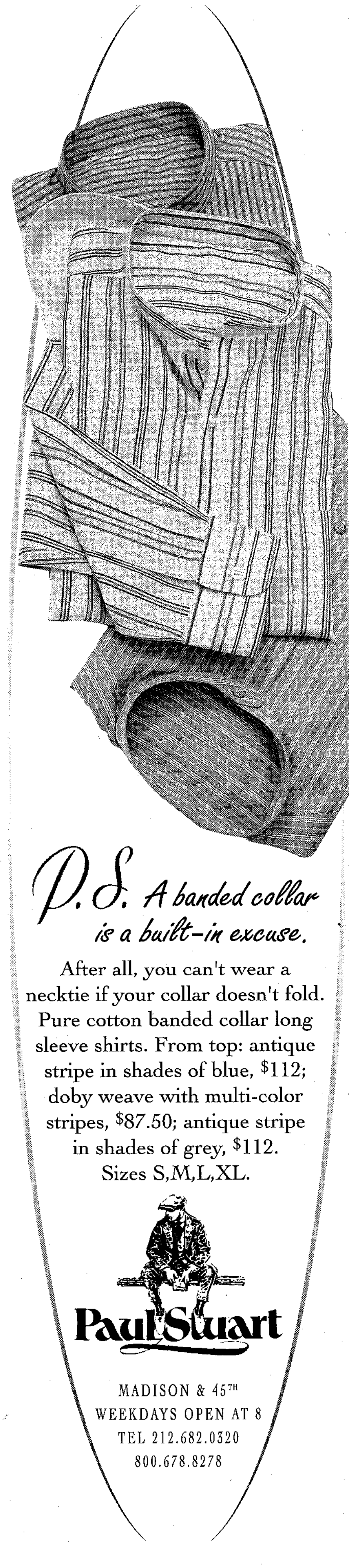
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advanced age, I would ever have any new relationships to look forward to.

I LIVED in New York. It was not the forbidding place then that it has become to me now. I was not afraid in those days. I used to tell perfect strangers how they should behave in public—that is, if I saw them misbehaving in public. My hat was firmly strapped in place. I was invulnerable. And if, for my interference, they threatened to kill me, I would inform them that killing me was not a proper response. None of them killed me; they only threatened to do so.

I had found a place to live near Bellevue Hospital, in a small apartment above a restaurant. The exhaust fan of the restaurant was just outside the window that I slept next to, on a lumpy rollout bed. The noise the exhaust fan made felt like such an injustice that I went to the owner of the restaurant to ask if he could be more considerate and close his restaurant earlier in the evening. The restaurant was owned by a family who came from somewhere in Asia. He did not say yes, he did not say no; everything went on just as it had done before.

I had no money. In the middle of the night, the landlord would call me up to demand the back months' rent. After a while, I did not answer the phone so late at night. I looked for a job, but I was not qualified to do anything respectable. On Sunday afternoons, I worked in a place where people rented bicycles. I changed my name, and started telling people I knew that I was a writer. This declaration went without comment. In this apartment, I slept with a man who used to buy me dinner. I liked fish of every kind, but I never ate much, no matter how hungry I had been when I sat down. When I went out with him, it was only to eat fish. Most of what we did together was inside the apartment, and that was soon over. In the middle of kissing me and doing other things, he would ask me to tell him of the other people I had kissed, but the list was so short then that he soon lost interest in kissing me and doing the other things. If only he had waited—for the list would become long and varied. So long and varied that if I met him today I would not be able to identify his face or any other part of him.

Soon I moved to an apartment on West Twenty-second Street. It was on the third floor; the walk up was tiring, but perhaps was good for me. The apartment was at the front of the building; it had two rooms and a small kitchen, which could hold no more than two people at once. The bathroom had a porcelain bathtub, and I used to lie in it and give myself coffee enemas. I don't remember who recommended such a thing to me; I do remember that once the coffee was too hot and I burned my bottom all the way up inside.

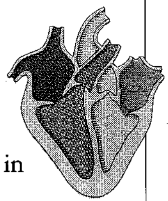
I slept on the floor in one of the rooms, because I could not afford a bed. I slept at first on newspapers and then on an old mattress I found on the street; someone gave me sheets, though I no longer remember who. I know that I slept more comfortably on the mattress than I did on the newspapers. The other room was empty except for a large old office desk, an old typewriter, and books that were piled on the floor. I was hungry; I could not afford to eat much real food. In the refrigerator I kept yogurt, a tin of brewer's yeast, orange juice, powdered skim milk, and many different kinds of vitamins; in the freezer compartment I kept slices of bananas. It was the refrigerator of someone who lived alone.

Below me lived a man who talked to himself: he had been in a war, and after that he never worked again—only talked to himself. On the ground floor, a man and a woman lived in the apartment they'd had since they were married, sometime in the nineteen-twenties. How the landlord wished them dead, for they paid a low rent. At first, the landlord had no luck at all: then the husband died, and the wife was very sad. I know she was very sad because she told me so. I don't know what became of her; I lost interest. Nothing happened to me as a result of all this.

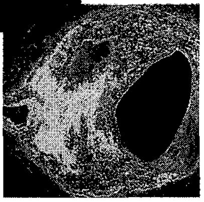
In the New York days of my twenties, the streets were wide and open and always sunny, not narrow and closed and dark, the way they are now when I walk down the same streets. When I lived in the house on Twenty-second Street, I used to get up late in the morning—so late that the morning was by then quite stale, on the brink of being another time of day altogether. Then I would parade around the apartment without my clothes on, and I would bathe and, if it was the right day of the week, take my

LDL CHOLESTEROL IS A TIME BOMB THAT CAN BURST INTO A HEART ATTACK. IS THERE ANY WAY TO STOP IT?

New drug therapies may be able to stymie the artery-clogging oxidation of LDL cholesterol and prevent heart attacks.



Scientists from pharmaceutical research companies discover more than 9 out of 10 new drugs.



For years, LDL cholesterol has been the major suspect in heart disease. Finally, researchers are beginning to understand why. Once oxidized, LDL cholesterol becomes a powerful lure, attracting other cells. Eventually, these microscopic clumps grow to become artery clogging plaque. This can lead to atherosclerosis, the disease that causes 97% of all heart attacks that occur in men and women in the United States. Can anything be done? There is hope. Right now, pharmaceutical company researchers are testing drugs that may be able to stop the oxidation process of LDL cholesterol. In all, pharmaceutical companies are currently developing 86 new medicines to treat or prevent heart disease.

prevention

Anyone can have a heart attack. But age, gender and heredity are major factors in determining overall risk. Fortunately, there are other risks that you can do something about. People who smoke, have elevated cholesterol, high blood pressure and don't exercise are eight times more likely to develop heart disease. Other contributing factors include obesity, diabetes and stress. To lower your risks: Quit smoking • Exercise regularly • Maintain a low fat diet • Lower your cholesterol levels • Get regular medical checkups.

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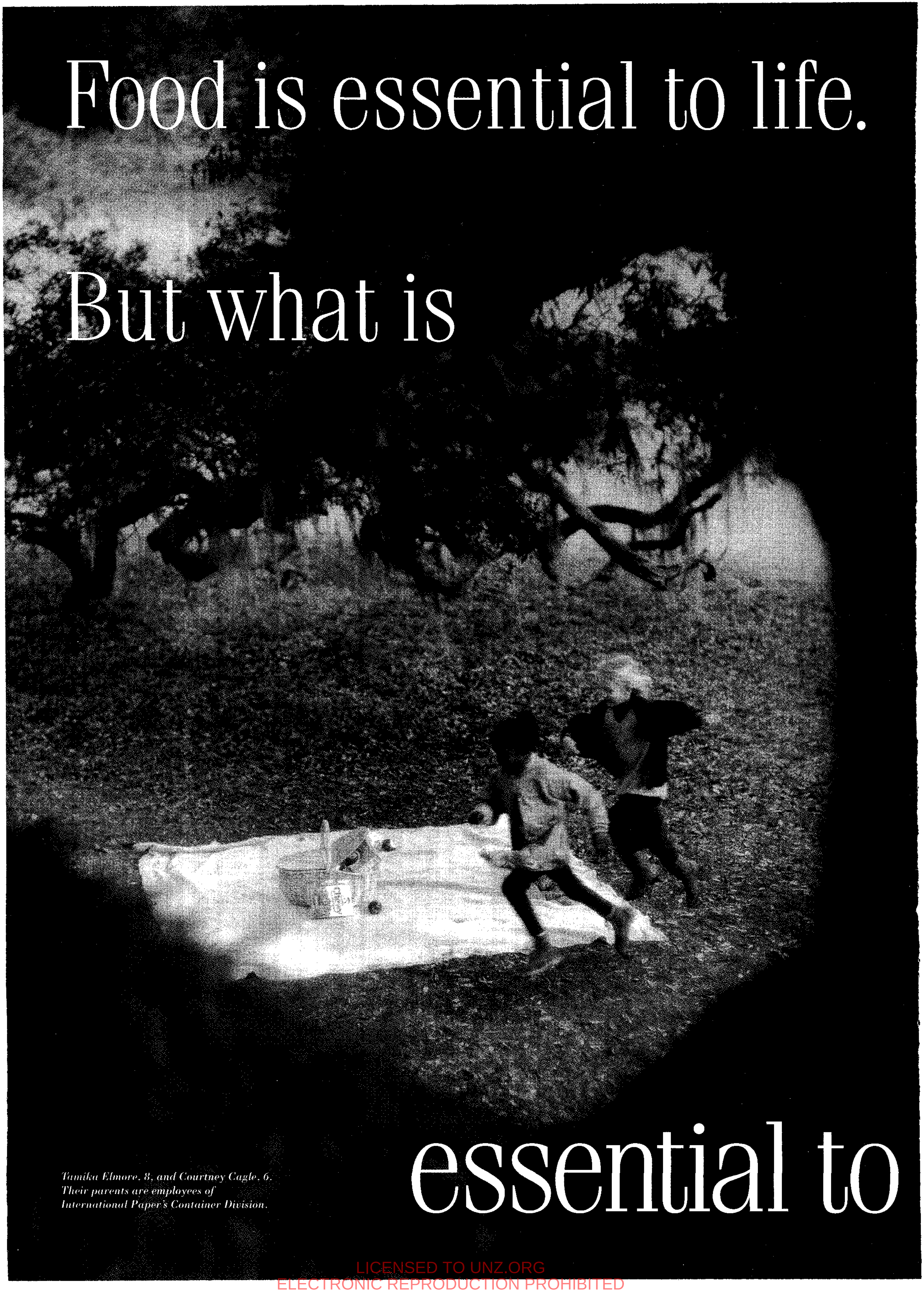
Food is essential to life.
But what is
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*Tamika Elmore, 8, and Courtney Cagle, 6.
Their parents are employees of
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The abundance of packaging may raise the question: would we be better off without it? The answer: not really. The practical solution is a packaging material that not only fulfills all the requirements of getting food to us but also is ecologically conscious, that is, renewable and recyclable.

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food?

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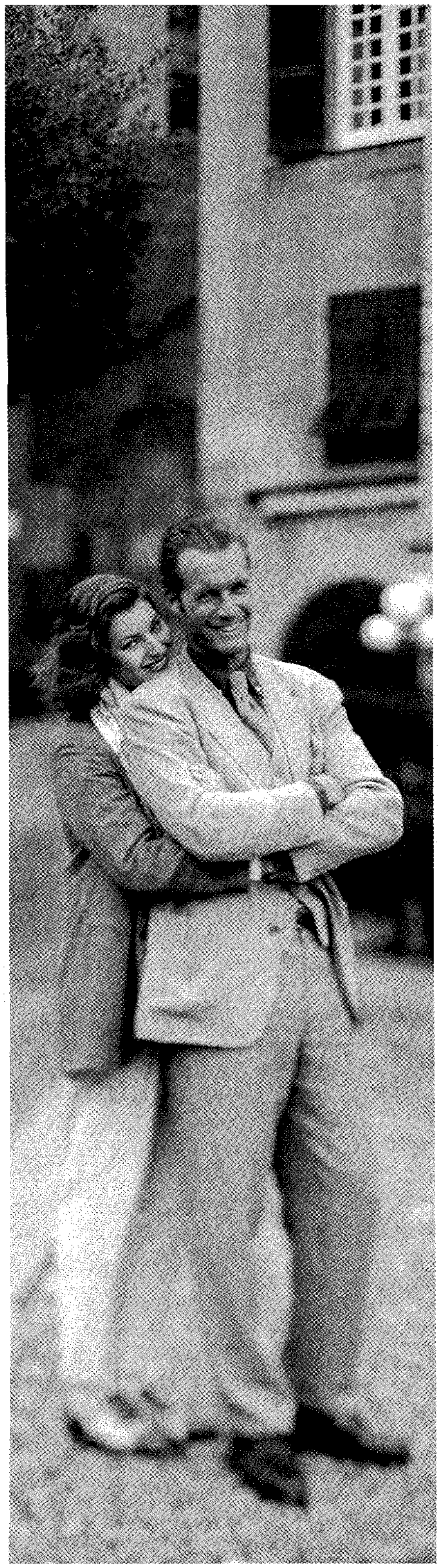

LUCIANO BARBERA

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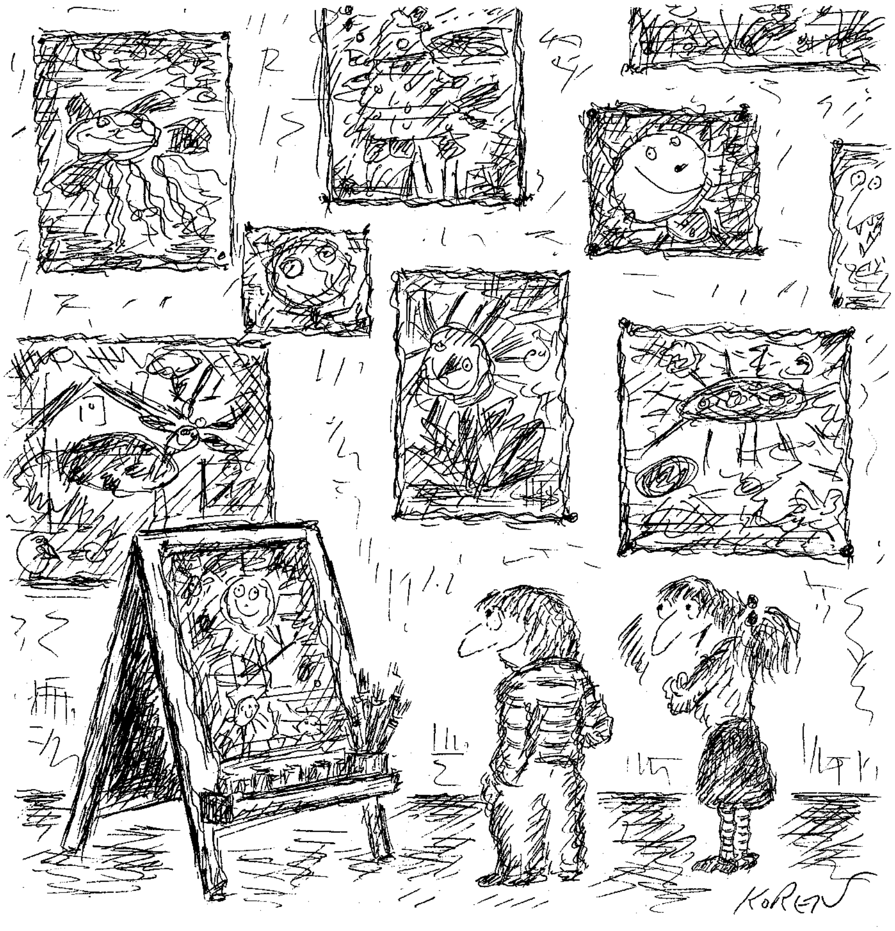
enema. I would have a small meal of something liquid, for I still would not and could not satisfy my appetite—any of my appetites. And then, finally, I would put on some clothes. This was not done carelessly.

I was very thin, because I had no money to eat properly, and because what little money I had I used to buy clothes. Being very thin, however, I looked good in clothes. I loved the way I looked all dressed up. I bought hats, I bought shoes, I bought stockings and garter belts to hold them up, I bought handbags, I bought suits, I bought blouses, I bought dresses, I bought skirts, and I bought jackets that did not match the skirts. I used to spend hours happily buying clothes to wear. Of course, I could not afford to buy my clothes in an actual store, a department store. Instead, they came from used-clothing stores, and they were clothes of a special kind, stylish clothes from a long-ago time—twenty or thirty or forty years earlier. They were clothes worn by people who were alive when I had not been; by people who were far more prosperous than I could imagine being. As a result, it took me a long time to get dressed, for I could not easily decide what combination of people, inconceivably older and more prosperous than I was, I wished to impersonate that day. It was sometimes hours after I started the process of getting dressed that I finally left my house and set off into the world.

My world at that time was a restaurant, someone else's apartment, or any other place where I had agreed to meet a friend; the location was almost never chosen by me. One rainy day in spring, I left my house after my elaborate dressing ritual, and when I was two blocks away from my house and two blocks away from the subway a wind came and blew my hat off my head. My hat, the one made of black corded velvet, landed in the gutter. When I picked it up, it was wet and dirty. That was a moment in my life when I could not take much more of sad realities: I turned around and walked home, and when I got there I took off my clothes and lay down on my bed. When my friends called to inquire why they would not be seeing me



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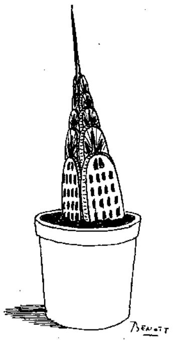
that day, I only repeated, again and again, the words "Because my hat fell into the gutter."

The day that the wind blew my hat into the gutter, my hair was not in its natural state, which would have been black and long and thick and tightly curled. I had left it tightly curled but I had made it short and blond. Had I worn this hat with my hair in its natural state, I would have been wearing it with sincerity, with good intentions; I would have meant the hat to be a hat. But this was not so at all. With my hair in its natural state, such a hat—a style of hat that had been popular when my mother was a young woman—would not have appealed to me. For, really, it was impractical for a modern woman, suitable only as a costume. To wear such a hat, I needed to transform my hair. And should I say that transforming my hair was a way of transforming myself? I had no consciousness of such things then.

I did not know then that I had embarked on something called self-invention, the making of a type of person that did not exist in the place where I was born—a place far away from New York and with a climate quite unlike the one that existed in New York. I wanted to be a writer; I was a person with opinions, and I wanted them to matter to other people. I can admit that about myself as I was then; I cannot admit it about myself as I am now. It was just when I had despaired of ever becoming a writer that I applied for a secretarial position at the magazine *Mademoiselle*. I was twenty-four years old. To my job interview I wore a very short skirt, a nylon blouse under which I wore no brassiere, red shoes with very high heels and white anklets, and no hat to cover my short-cropped blond hair. *Mademoiselle* did not hire me. The people I talked to there had been so kind and sweet toward me, both on the phone and in person, that it took me a very long time to understand that they would never hire me. I wondered if it was my shoes and the anklets, or perhaps my hair. I was speaking of these things to a friend, wondering out loud why had I not been offered a job at *Mademoiselle* when the people there seemed to like me so much, and he said, But how could I have applied to a place like that—didn't I know that they never hired black girls? And I thought, But how was I to know that I was a black girl? I never pass myself in a corridor and say, I am a black girl. I never see myself coming toward me as I come round a bend and say, There is that black girl coming toward me. How was I really to know such a thing?

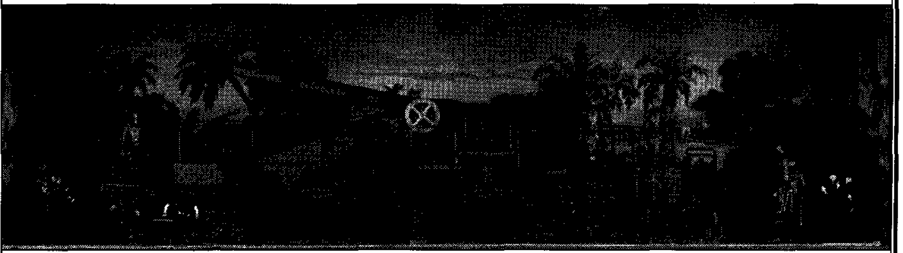


This life went on, this life of being young and in New York. I wondered if I would be young forever; I wondered if I would live in New York forever. Neither prospect gave me pleasure. What did I yearn for? In the New York of my youth, the evenings were too long, no matter what the time of year was. What I did with some people I knew was to drink. What I did with other people was to go and buy drugs from a man who kept a Physicians' Desk Reference on a table in his very pleasant living room. We would sit on his comfortable sofa and order drugs. He would present us with a tray of tablets, small and in many colors—it reminded me of going to a shop in my childhood, where I would stand behind a counter and gaze at the jars full of sweets, sweets I was too poor to afford more than one or two of. In this man's pleasant living room, we would gaze upon his tray of colorful tablets, and we would decide which ones to buy on the basis of our attraction to the colors, and then look up the results they were expected to give in the Physicians' Desk Reference. On a day we were not visiting him, he was taken away by the police, and I have not heard of him since.

There were other ways of filling those long evenings. The list of the people who kissed me and did other things with me became so long that now I cannot remember the names on it. And though I remember many faces, I cannot say with certainty whose face I allowed to kiss me and do other things to me, and whose face I stood with in the dark before we shook hands and said good night. It was always in the dark, at night. There was a reason for that, perhaps practical, perhaps not; to give a reason now, I would have to make it up. Sometimes I meet people who say to me that they knew me well very long ago, and I can only wonder, How well could that have been? Sometimes I meet people who tell me they knew me in those days and they mention an event. I can remember the event, but I cannot remember them. At least, I don't recognize their faces; perhaps I would recognize other parts of them. But even the act of recollection is exhausting. My youth was exhausting, it was dangerous, and it is a miracle that I grew out of it unscathed.

Really, the list of those who went in and out of my bed was not so long; it was only a long list when compared with the sad facts regarding a part of my upbringing. I was brought up to marry one man and to have children with this one man, and this one man would be the only man to go in and out of my bed. It was understood that this one man would go in and out of the bed of many other women and have many children with them, which is not to say that he would have been a father to them any more than he would have been a husband to me. The person I had become, the person I had made myself into, did not place an obligation on anyone I allowed into my bed. But this was not without its snags and inconveniences. So many people are not as pleasing to look at in the light of the sun as they are to look at by the light of a lamp. It would happen that some of them left their smell with me, and it took the smell of many others to get rid of the one smell. It would happen that I would wake up, my throat raw from hours of gasping, my tongue sore from being fastened between my teeth, suppressing cries of ecstasy or boredom.

One year, I created a Halloween costume for myself by buying a dozen and a half bananas made of plastic (the sort used in some homes as a centerpiece for the dining table), stringing them together so that they made a skirt of sorts, and then tying the whole thing around my waist. I wore nothing underneath, had nothing to cover the rest of my body except an old fur coat that I had bought in an old-fur-coat store for thirty dollars. When I arrived at the party, of course, I removed the coat. The hair on the other parts of my body was not the same color as the hair on my head. I wore no hat to conceal this; it was not a detail that concerned me. And the evening passed, joining the other long evenings that were so exhausting to fill. What did I want? Did I know? I was twenty-five, I was twenty-six, I was twenty-seven, I was twenty-eight. At thirty, I was married. ◆



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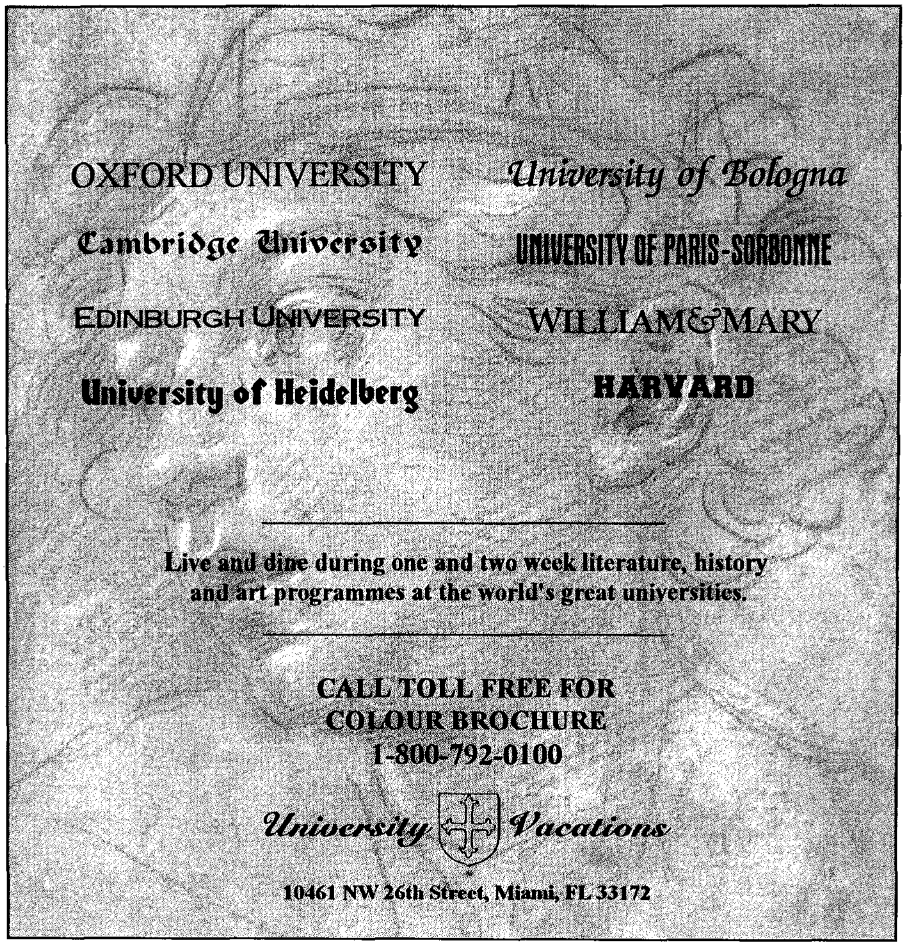

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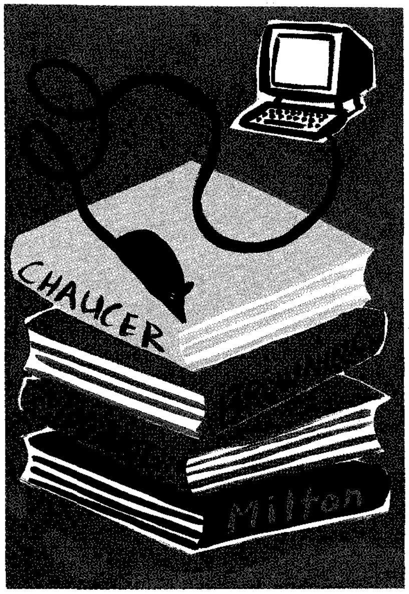
BYTE VERSE

How to wing your way through thirteen hundred years of English poetry in an afternoon of interfacing.

BY ANTHONY LANE

PICK a poet. Any poet. Now quote me a line. And another. Now the whole poem. Good. Now every poem written by that poet. No, wait, here's an even better idea. How about every poem by every poet in the whole of English literature? Well, what are you waiting for—lost your tongue? Don't you kids *read* these days?



TOM SLAUGHTER

Sounds like a job for "English Poetry," or, to use the full title, "The English Poetry Full-Text Database," a neat and pleasing CD-ROM package produced by a company named Chadwyck-Healey. It consists of four compact disks and an installation disk, plus some chunky manuals explaining what the disks contain and how to use them. What they contain is the complete works of approximately a thousand two hundred and fifty poets, starting at the year A.D. 600, and reaching all the way to the beginning of this century. That is, by any reckoning, a lot of poets, even if some of them are poets only in a very loose sense of the word, and Chadwyck-Healey must be fairly relieved that it didn't have to throw a launch party for the entire crowd. I mean, imagine the state of the *carpet.*

But who are they all? How many poets could you list off the cuff? I sat down for half an hour, scratched my brain, and got as far as a lousy fifty-five. Even then, I could feel a little blizzard of desperation starting up as I stumbled to the waste shores of memory and came back with names like Lyly, Shenstone, and Akenside, and other guys who sound like merchant banks. There was a perverse satisfaction, when time was up, in realizing that I had remembered Edward Young but forgotten Coleridge. (Still, *Coleridge* couldn't remember who Coleridge was most of the time, what with chasing the poppy and everything, so there was no shame in that.) But I was left twelve hundred poets short. I had neglected, in alphabetical order, pretty well everyone from John Abbot, whose "Devout Rhapsodies" came out in 1647, to that strange creature known to the world as Zepheria, whose one extant work, first printed in 1594, is actually *called* "Zepheria," which suggests that he, or she, may have got hold of the wrong end of the stick. But "English Poetry," though scrupulous, is not remotely snobbish; everyone is invited to the feast. The database holds roughly a hundred and sixty-five thousand individual poems, and one has to face up to the alarming possibility that some of these have never been read by Harold Bloom.

They are divided by period over the four disks, and the spread itself is instructive. Disk 1 runs from 600 to 1660; Disk 2 runs from 1660 to 1800; the last pair is required for a single century, 1800-1900, splitting the poets alphabetically and sparking off thoughts about Victorian printing technology and the leap in literacy. If you want full value from the set, you need to shuffle between disks at will; I used "English Poetry" in both London and New York, and the single-disk drive at the London Library feels a little primitive next to the multi-disk changer at the New York Public Library. Even there, the hardware seems to struggle with the simple embarrassment of the software's riches, and I sat clicking my tongue and sighing as the computer gave out that familiar, rats-on-the-roof sound of a complex search. You can wait up to ten whole minutes while "English Poetry" hums and haws and tries to decide who Sir John Suckling was and whether he ever used the word "balloon." There are a bunch of fruitful things you can do with this gizmo and almost nothing you can't do, although it did turn nasty when, as a favor to future students, I tried to erase Chaucer's translation of "The Romance of the Rose." You can call up all the poems by one writer, or every poem from one era; you can hunt for something half remembered if you can cough up a first line, a title, or even a particular word. And that word itself can come from anywhere: from the text, the dedication, the epigraph. Oh, and you can read a poem, which is always nice.

People will arrive at "English Poetry" in search of different grails. The plainest are the most baffling: during my vigil at the Public Library, a woman approached and asked politely if she could take over for a while, since she needed to study an Elizabeth Barrett Browning poem. Sure, I said, and prepared to make way, wondering why she would go to such electronic lengths over something found so readily in a book. Mrs. Browning's fans, I would have thought, are a sturdy breed, who like to buy rather than borrow—unlike, say, Dryden readers, who always seem to be pacing the library shelves with a heavy air, and hand over cash for the stuff only in the last resort. I was about to put this to the woman—my fellow disk jockey, so to speak—but she said she couldn't be bothered just now and drifted away, leaving me to speculate on the sort of person who would really *need* "English Poetry," in the way that you need a fridge, or a life. Say you are a fresh-faced young graduate student with a weakness for velvet scarves and an unswerving faith in the old Housman principle that good verse should make the hair stand up on the back of your neck. You determine to write a Ph.D. on the most swoony epoch of English poetry you can find. Adjourning, therefore, to the college computer room, and inserting your disks in the ROM drive, you type in "sleep" and "death," and ask the computer to show you every poem pub-

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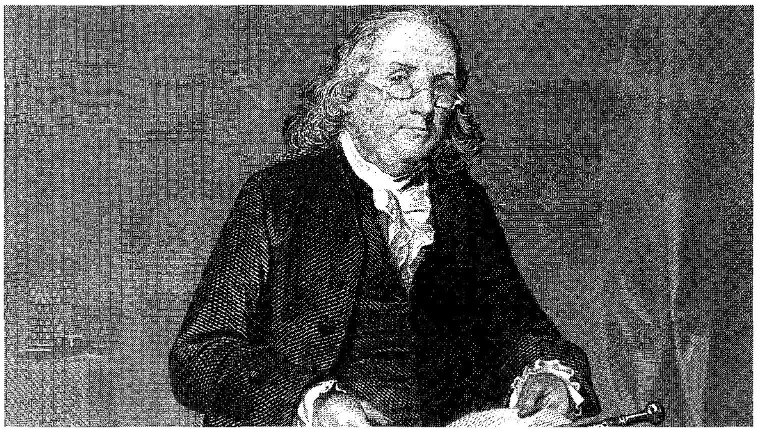

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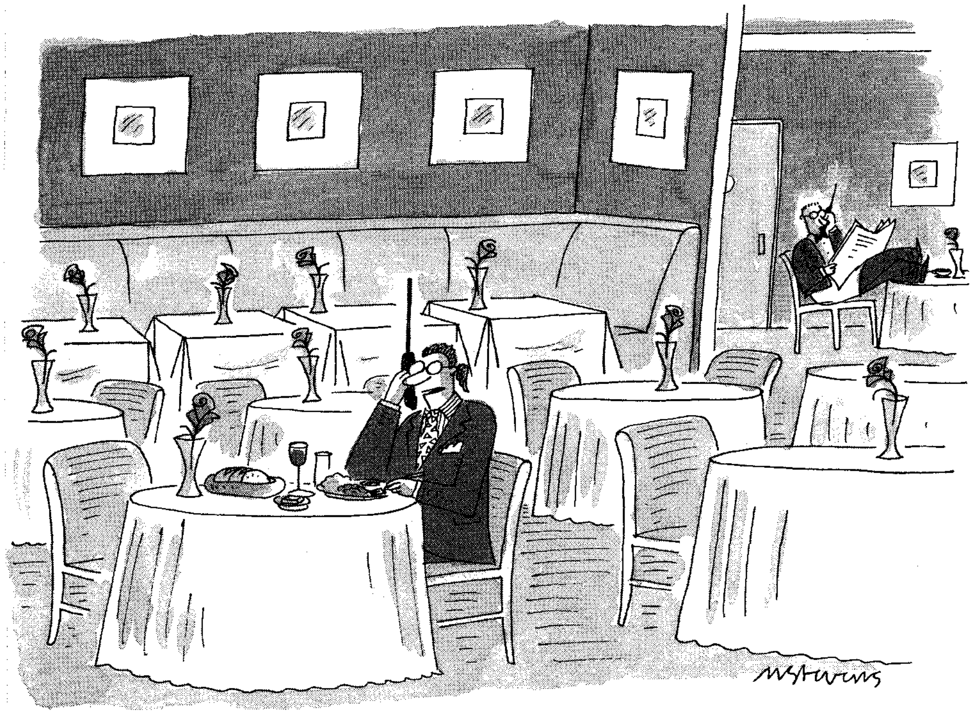

"Everything's fine, thanks."

• •

lished between 1800 and 1835 that contains these two words. Disk 3 gives you six hundred and seventy-two poems, Disk 4 a mere five hundred and sixty-five. Each poem will have a number of what the manual calls "hits"—not, as you might expect, peak moments when Shelley is backed by an electronic burst of the Supremes but simply highlighted instances of your key words. You slip nicely from one to the next with a single button-punch; if the sheer volume of hits still looks too much to bear, you can then backtrack and slim down your order—request examples drawn only from rhymed verse, say, or those in which "sleep" comes *within ten words* of "death." Cool.

At the end of one day, with a break for sandwiches and eyedrops, you should have amassed the same amount of research that is normally arrived at after six mildewed months in a library. The research may be of a particular kind, but, if so, it's the best kind: that errant, excitable, semi-accidental rummaging which is guaranteed to kick the synapses into life. The uncharitable view of "English Poetry" is that it will turn students into sluggards (which is hardly a major overhaul); that it relieves them of the need to grapple with literature, and encourages them to wing it instead; and that, most perilous of all, they will forget the physical textures and habits, the ageless stuff, of which reading is made. The download killeth, say the purists, but the letter giveth life. The charitable view, on the other hand, is that nothing dies, and that the database will send you back to books feeling none the worse—pretty well tuned, in fact. It doesn't do the work for you, it does the legwork; time previously devoted to the long grind can now be freed up for the really scary part, which is called *thinking*. Once you have a printout of your sleep-meets-death findings, the onus is then on you, as never before, to wonder what on earth they might mean; the computer hasn't a clue. All it can do, at best, is wait for three years and then send you a note of congratulation when you finally publish "A Drowsy Numbness: Narcophilia and the Drugging of the Self in Early-Nineteenth-Century Verse."

You may, of course, decide to spend the time otherwise; freshmen, especially, who get smart to "English Poetry" may set it to dig up some delicately comparative flower imagery in Campion and Blake, then sneak out to an all-day screening of the complete "Porky's" cycle. If so, they should drop a line to their liberator, Sir Charles Chadwyck-Healey, and thank him for his help. For it was in 1990 that Sir Charles—a big player in electronic publishing, with a company based in Cambridge, England—was walking through the British Library, where the hoards of text are as formidable, and often as inaccessible, as any in the world. He had, if not a Damascene flash, a very good idea: wouldn't it be wonderful if the riches displayed there (or, better still, those undisplayed) could be compressed into something the size of a fried egg? An editorial board was formed, ferocious textual criteria were laid down; all that remained was the small matter of typing in a hundred and sixty-five thousand poems, some of which might contain words like "transubstantiates" and "Mnemosyne." If, as intended, "English Poetry" was to be not merely a scholarly aid but a document of record, the standard of transcription had to approach perfection. There was only one thing for it: go to the Philippines. That is where you look, apparently, if you like your keystrokes clean and cheap. Some observers may catch a whiff of the sweatshop here; at the same time, one is struck by the shamefully tempting thought that somewhere, sometime in the last five years, a demure young Filipino typist sat down, adjusted her spectacles, and began to scrutinize the lyrics of Rochester. If she couldn't summon the shade of that lively peer from the depths of Hades, nothing ever will. Manila could be just his kind of town.

But if our typist failed to understand a single word in front of her, so much the better. What needed protecting was not her innocence but a far more precious gift, her spelling. You are far more likely to misspell a line of Langland, say, if you have a vague idea of its meaning and its current equivalent than if you absorb it purely as a sequence of letters. It was decided that to modernize the texts in any way, apart from leaving out the monks' doodles from old bits of parchment, would be a betrayal of the endeavor, and a waste of time; it could also clear a path for the tacit bowdlerizer. But this admirable pedantry does present its own set of problems. Within minutes of starting up the program, I was having to *de*modernize like crazy, simply to get within sight of my target. Take Sir Thomas Wyatt, whose most celebrated poem, one of those unnerving, time-warpy works which appear to have been written last Wednesday, be-

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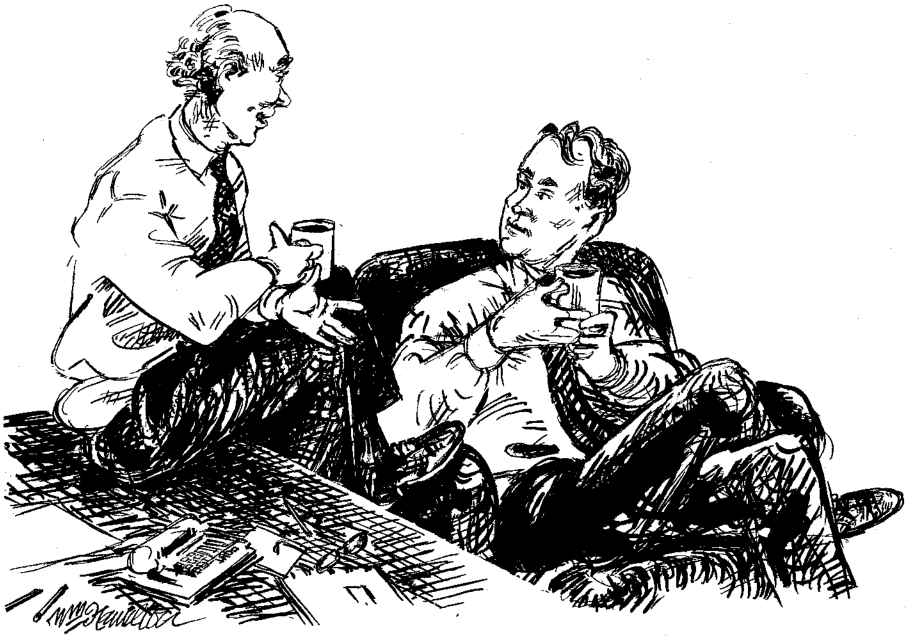
gins, "They flee from me, that sometime did me seek / With naked foot, stalking in my chamber." Only, it doesn't. I went looking for it via the keywords "seek" and "chamber" and got nowhere, because I should have been using "seeke" and "chambre" and didn't have the wit to respell them. In the event, I never made it to Wyatt, because "seek" and "chamber" took me off on a perfectly acceptable round trip. First stop was the poet Robert Baron, whose "Tuchesphaira; or, Fortunes Tennis Ball," which hit the market in 1650, soon had me crouched with fascination at the net. Not only does it include the first—and, as far as I can tell, the only—mention in the database of the word "flap-jacks" but it also describes some "dew-bedabbled" boar hounds that "lard the thirsty ground with blood and sweat." Aha, I thought, a nice greasy echo of Prince Harry's gibe in the first part of "King Henry IV": "Falstaff sweats to death, /And lards the lean earth as he walks along."

This, I suspect, is what "English Poetry" does best: random, impromptu excursions into the history of the language. The disks function less as an anthology than as a companion to the Oxford English Dictionary—which is also, incidentally, available in electronic form. (Hook the two up and you'd be really flying.) Close reading is hard on screen, as hard as it will always be, but browsing is a breeze. The verbal landscape revealed by my leisurely scrollings through "lard"—a high-flown word would have been far less productive, an abstract one too widespread—went from lush to rocky within the space of seconds. Occasionally, I stopped to admire the view; the fact that "lard" was a medieval Scottish spelling of "lord," for instance, landed me happily in Gavin Douglas country. Douglas is one of those poets who were forever being recommended by Ezra Pound, which naturally arouses suspicion; I was never forced to read the Douglas translation of the Aeneid, so I never did, but through the divine intervention of "English Poetry" I just happened upon it, which is invariably the best way, and found it to be even more robust and tightly packed than I had been led to believe, not least in its Caxton-slamming preface. Back-pedalling at speed, I had to remind myself that the infuriating thing about Pound's literary judgments—particularly the wacky ones—is that they turn out to be so damnably right. But even Ezra might have been nonplussed by the outpourings of Thomas Freeman, an epigrammatist of the early seventeenth century. Freeman is little known, and justly so, but, having squeezed through the lard entrance, he soon became *the* discovery of my experiments with "English Poetry."

> Now lard your lips, and glut your greasie logs,
> You *Hinxy*-hinds, you Bul-biefe-bacon-hogs.

Way to go, Tom! This is a tremendous



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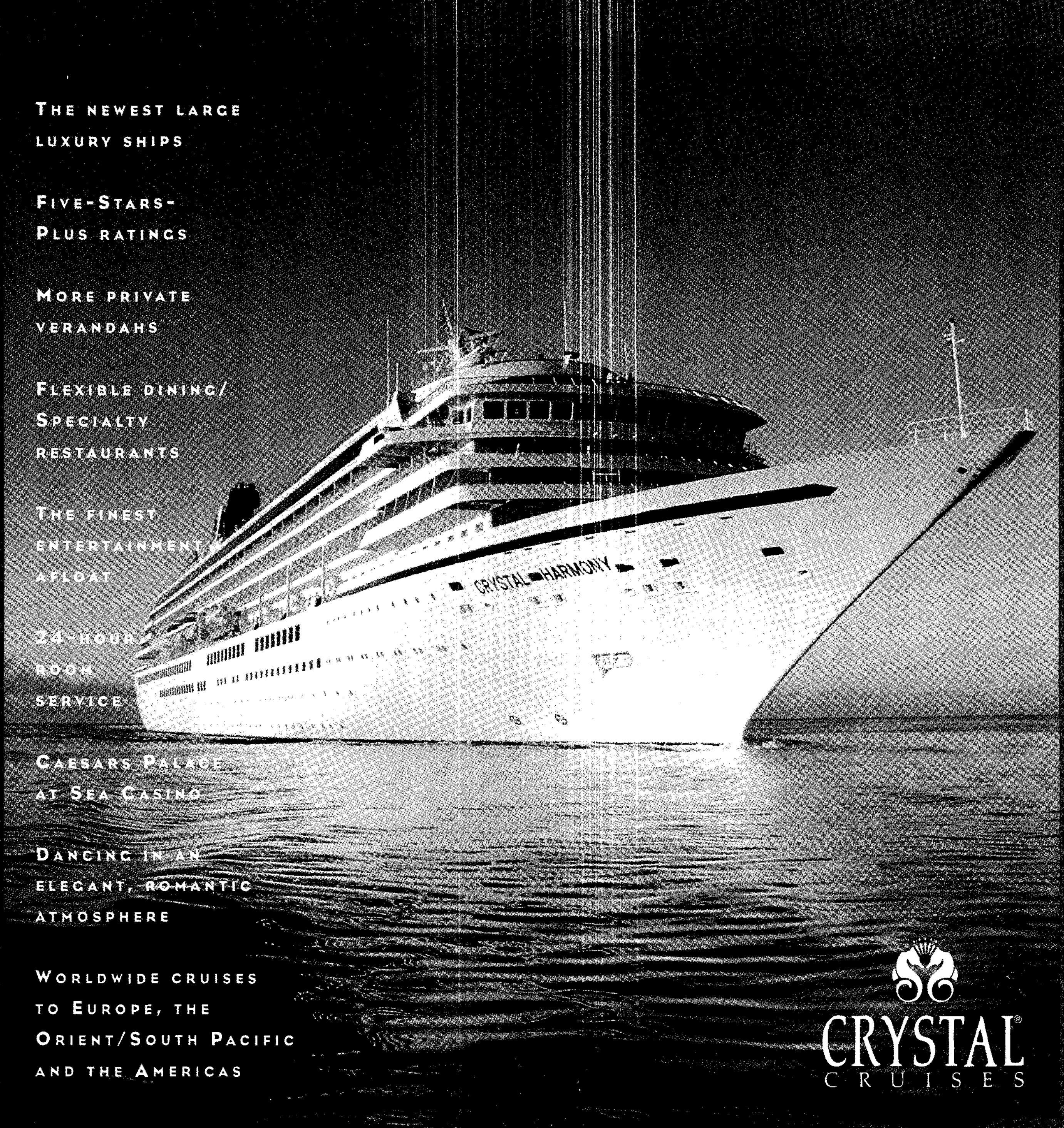

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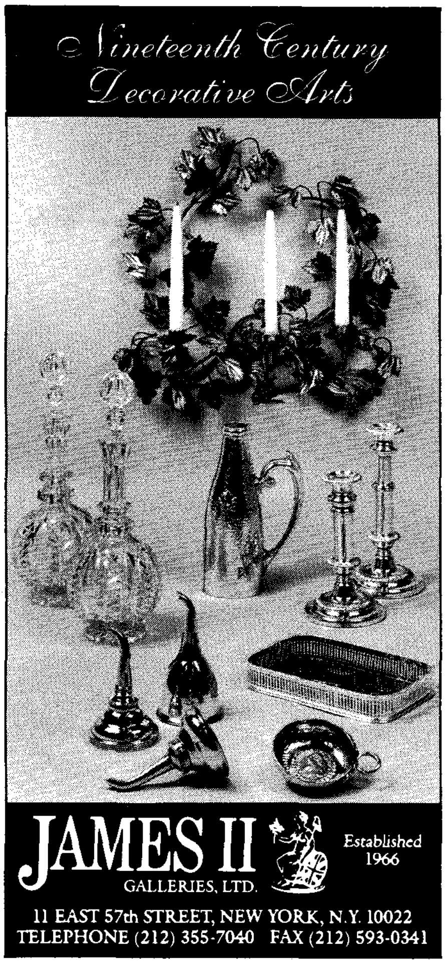

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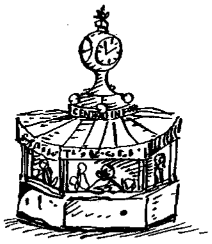
mix—the prosody of Hopkins meets the world view of Hulk Hogan—and whether it makes good or bad poetry is of little consequence. The language is all shook up, and Freeman himself must have been a scream; he was under no illusion about the measure of his own talent, and thus needed no encouragement to flourish what little he had:

> Whoop, whoop, me thinkes I heare
>   my Reader cry,
> Here is rime doggrell: I confesse it I.

Winding up my lard work, I thought I should probably check the "Henry IV" quotation, not merely to get it right but to show respect where it is due. But I hit a wall. Here's the big joke about "English Poetry": no Shakespeare plays. It's like going to a liquor store and finding they're out of Scotch—let's face it, out of alcohol. The Bard looms too large; he could not be fitted in, and must instead be consulted in a companion set of disks, entitled "English Verse Drama." There are other notable omissions: no hymns published after 1800 (a serious loss, and a bad decision), no American poetry (coming soon), and no verse from this century (copyright quandaries, presumably, or worries about what kind of noise the ROM drive would make when it tried to scan an Allen Ginsberg poem). What's more, the software people rather sweetly regret, in their publicity pamphlet, that they were unable to include "Poems never published," which means we never get to peruse "My Cat," lines composed on the back of a cereal box by every English child under the age of seven. But don't worry: there is quite enough rime doggrell to be getting on with here, and much to be said for the humbling "virtue of incompleteness" extolled by Johnson in the preface to his Dictionary. The wonder of "English Poetry" is that it has precisely the opposite effect from that intended by the manufacturers and imagined by the novice user. You hunch like a pianist over the keys, knowing what awaits you, thinking, Ah, the untold wealth of English literature! What hidden jewels I shall excavate from the deepest mines of human fancy! How brightly the ranks of mute inglorious Miltons will break their long-encrusted silence and give tongue! What ho! A week later, you close a file, exit, switch off, knuckle away the redness from your eyes and think, What a steaming *heap*.



NEVER have I beheld such a magnificent tribute to the powers of human incompetence—and also, by the same token, to the blessings of human forgetfulness. In an idle hour, I tracked a word down to a fourteenth-century Northumbrian devotional poem. Fair enough, except that it came on Line No. 28,088 of a fourteenth-century Northumbrian devotional poem. I guess Northumbrians had nothing better to do in those days, apart from staring out the arrow slit and waiting for the rain to stop. Right from the infancy of the language, when only about three people in the British Isles could read, and two of them lived in the Hebrides, Englishmen have confused the desire to express themselves, and their inalienable right to do so, with the belief that they can actually write. I found a Victorian light versifier named R. H. Barham, whose rhyming pick-me-ups, presumably meant to be howled out at hunting dinners, reduced me to a state of head-cradling gloom; I found more dialect poets than there are dialects ("For Rab has thrown his pen awa' "); I found a ditty that began:

> O, Janny Mershall, Janny Mershall,
> Janny Mershall's candy, O;
> I always like to patronize
> Janny Mershall's candy, O.

The heavenly thing about this, of course, is that the poet had to devote his creative urge to only one word in the entire quatrain—and he blew it. "Patronize"? How about "buy and suck"? Even if the whole stanza is a whorehouse joke, it's still too snooty for its own good.

We always like to patronize bad verse, and one and a half millennia of cloth ears should by rights make us wonder whether England's reputation as the garden of modern Western culture, green with shaded thought, is properly deserved; a few days with these disks, and anyone would start to wish that more poets had thrown their pens awa'. Yet I found myself stirred, not engulfed, by the flow of mediocrity. "English Poetry" offers a way out of the crucial, and frankly tedious, impasse that has stiffened within the academy in recent years—the standoff, in broad terms, be-

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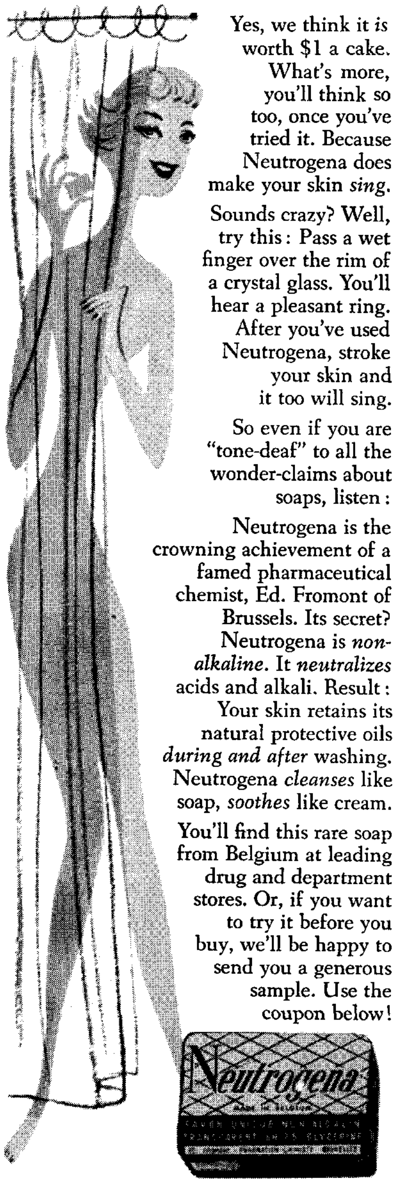

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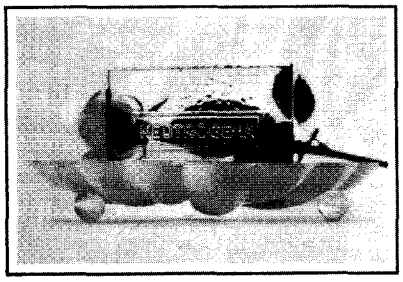

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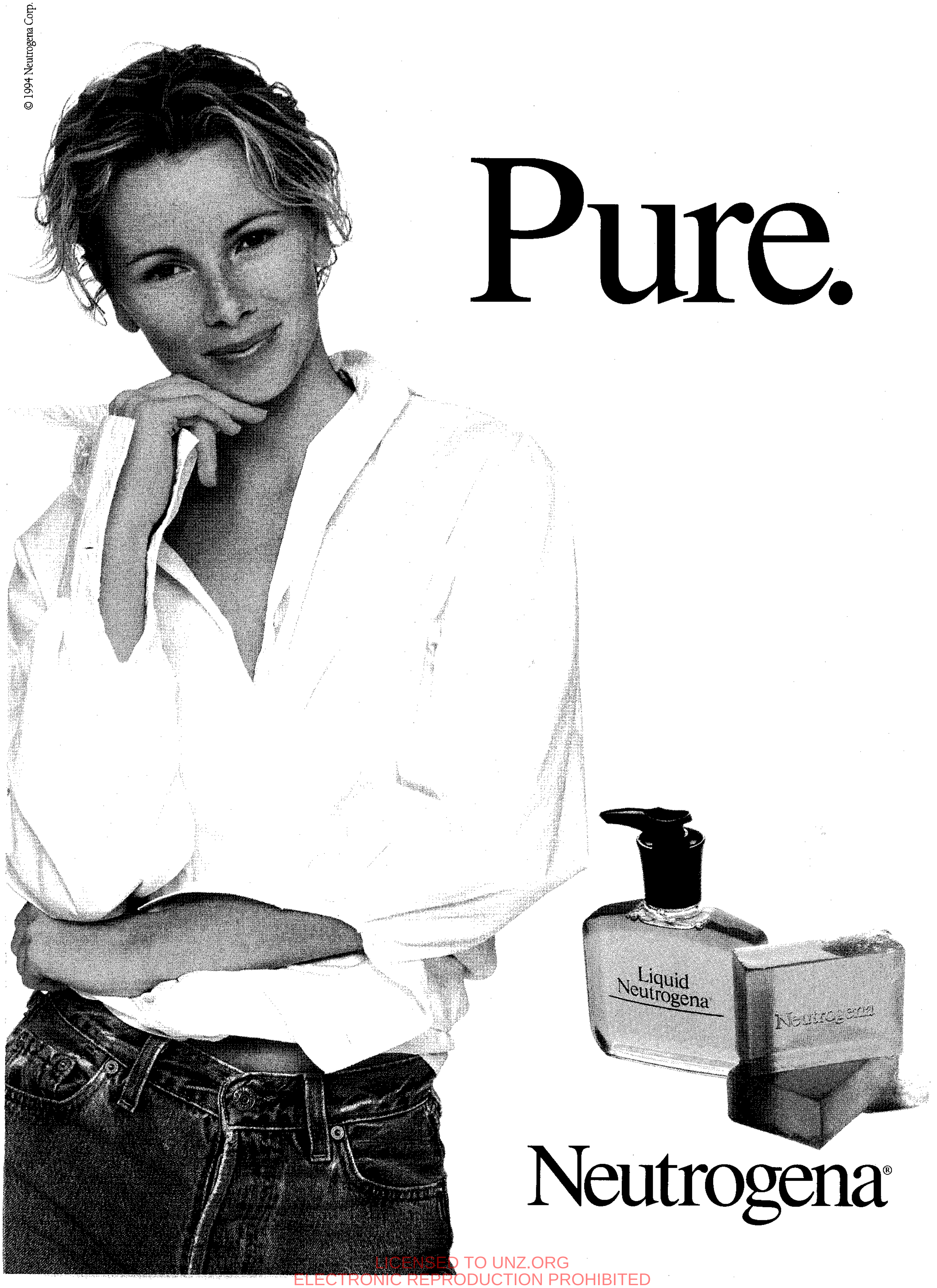
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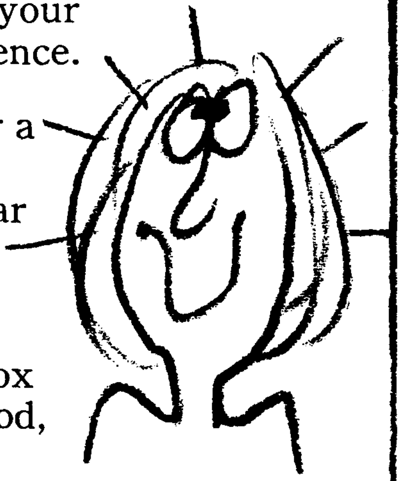

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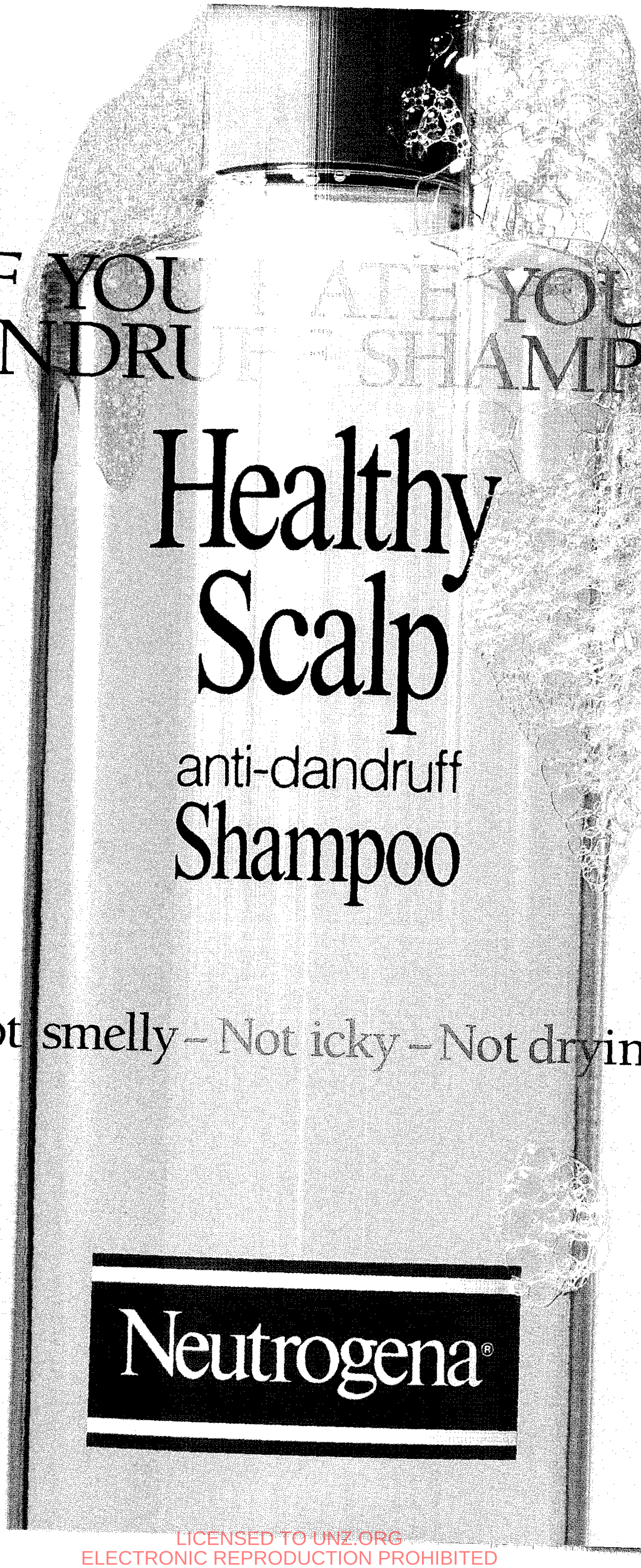

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tween the élitist and the democratic. A fistful of great authors or acres of the brazenly ungreat? Browning or R. H. Barham? Browning or *Mrs.* Barham, presuming that anyone could bring herself to marry the creator of "Patty Morgan the Milkmaid's Story"? What "English Poetry" makes clear is that we can have and enjoy both—that one, indeed, could not exist without the other. What we call "literature" is simply the cream skimmed off the top of an insatiable artistic need; scholars are the Patty Morgans of their generation, hired to determine just how deep the cream goes and whether present tastes will find it sour.

It is only natural, in the heady atmosphere of "English Poetry," that first instincts should send the rookie off to the furthest and most enticing crannies of the language; you can always be sure of *trouvailles* out there, and the classic poets—even those you haven't read—seem familiar and obvious by comparison, their achievements already edited with care, picked apart in concordances, and declaimed into our ears. Yet slowly they reassert themselves; after all, who else can set the standard by which we judge our new discoveries? I would have been sorry to miss Thomas Freeman, but his spirited epigrams cannot hope to compare with those so smoothly turned by Donne some twenty years later, and, as far as hearty loathing goes, he fades into a mad minor blur beside the example of Dr. Swift. Poetical ripeness is not all, but it outshines all, and to redirect our homage elsewhere, hoisting up the evidently dull on the ground of novelty or political correctness, is a folly soon flattened by "English Poetry." The mute inglorious Miltons, it turns out, were not mute at all—they made a hell of a racket, and we should be grateful that they did. But this does not make them glorious, far from it. The principal payoff of this database, as far removed from technology as you could wish, is to humanize the creative act, constantly reminding us of the deep comedy of our motives, and of the weird, rhythmical lengths to which we will go in baring them to the eyes of the world. The joys of "English Poetry" should be open to all, which makes it slightly unfortunate that the complete set of disks will set you back fifty-one thousand dollars. Whoop, whoop. ♦

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LETTER FROM MOSCOW

THE TYCOON AND THE KREMLIN

Vladimir Gusinsky is sometimes referred to as Russia's Citizen Kane, and Aleksandr Korzhakov as Boris Yeltsin's Rasputin—and their feud has everyone worried.

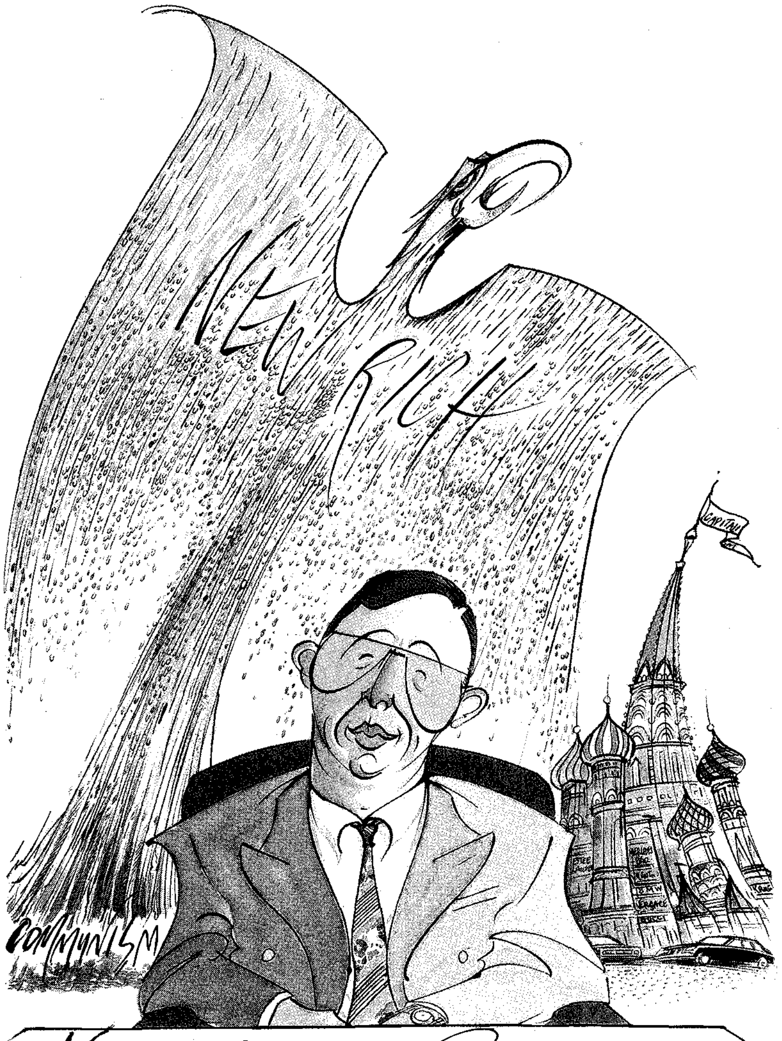
BY DAVID REMNICK

UNTIL the collapse of the Soviet Union, Taganka Square was known in Moscow and in the empire beyond as a nexus of the avant-garde. The Taganka Theatre, led by its artistic director, Yuri Lyubimov, dared to put on politically barbed productions that were calculated to delight the audience and irritate the regime. Lyubimov finally wearied of the political intrigues and the attacks orchestrated against him by the Kremlin, and in 1984 he went into exile. He could not return to the Soviet Union until 1988, when the more liberal faction in Mikhail Gorbachev's ruling Politburo won a furious battle to grant the director a visa. These days, Lyubimov comes and goes, the theatre stages whatever it wants, and no one much cares. As a symbol of the new, the Taganka has been replaced by another building on the square—the Moscow Commercial Club, a plutocrats' watering hole modelled on the pre-Bolshevik redoubt the English Club. For the first generation of post-Soviet tycoons, the Commercial Club is their Athenaeum, their Racquet & Tennis Club, a self-conscious attempt to flee the all-are-equal-in-poverty egalitarianism of the old regime. The more exclusive, the better.

The industrialist who runs the Commercial Club says that it will soon be "a closed society with permanent members." On the premises are three luxury restaurants, a casino, and a series of meeting rooms. No rising damp, no filth in the corner, no curious smells—nothing Soviet. It is bad form to show up in anything more casual than a suit—a foreign suit. On the night I visited the club this winter, the occasion was the presentation of a glossy new almanac of entrepreneurs, "The Rebirth of the Russian Business Élite." Dozens of BMWs, Mercedes-Benzes, Jeep Cherokees, and Lincoln Town Cars were lined up at the curb. Well-dressed men and their sable-swathed women negotiated the icy sidewalk and headed for the entrance. Their bodyguards, with pistols and machine guns bulging their jackets, stayed close. Everywhere was the nervous static and chatter of walkie-talkies. It was five degrees below zero. The guards wore no hats. They did not smoke or nip from a flask. They were disciplined, and well paid for being so. Before ringing the security buzzer, I checked the club's address to make sure it was the right place. It was—No. 2a Bolshaya Kommunisticheskaya Ulitsa, or No. 2a Big Communist Street.

I was visiting the Commercial Club on the off chance that the most powerful and mysterious member of the new Moscow élite, Vladimir Gusinsky, would show up. It is hard to pin a familiar analogy on Gusinsky. The Russian J. P. Morgan? The Russian Citizen Kane? No single tag quite does the job. Gusinsky is one of ten businessmen listed in the new almanac as *super*-élite. According to polls, he is the leading entrepreneur in Russia. As a pioneer in commercial banking and real estate, the head of a vast holding company called MOST, Gusinsky is a kind of robber baron—a forty-two-year-old first-generation capitalist. He is also Russia's first and biggest media mogul and, as a result, is deeply embroiled in Kremlin politics. MOST owns a controlling interest in Russia's main independent commercial television channel, NTV, and also owns a leading liberal newspaper, *Segodnya* (*Today*), and the radio station Ekho Moskvy (Echo of Moscow). Gusinsky collects art, bankrolls a few charities, flies in his own plane. Since he travels in a business world rife with mafiosi (fifty executives were assassinated in Moscow alone last year), he protects himself as if he were a head of state. Of fourteen thousand people his companies employ, more than a thousand are members of a privately trained security force. His cars are bulletproof. He lives in a dacha compound outside Moscow and has apartments in various European cities. He takes his vacations in Spain and Portugal. His son is in a Swiss boarding school.

Gusinsky is not universally adored. Russian human-rights activists and Western intelligence agencies find it curious that one of his leading advisers is Filipp Bobkov, a former deputy chairman of the K.G.B. Bobkov began his K.G.B. career under Lavrenty Beria, in 1945, and in the Brezhnev era he created the infamous Fifth Directorate, which waged war on dissidents. Russian critics also say that Gusinsky's relationship with Yuri Luzhkov, the mayor of Moscow, is far too close. An enduring figure in the Moscow *nomenklatura*, Luzhkov does evoke a ready American comparison: Richard Daley, boss of Chicago. MOST headquarters is in the same building as Luzhkov's headquarters—City Hall. The city bank account, in large measure, gains interest in the vaults of MOST. The Kremlin, for its part, would like to see Gusinsky disappear. Boris Yeltsin's advisers suspect that Gusinsky will put his money behind Luzhkov or some other opposition candidate in the 1996 Presidential campaign. And this, they say, cannot be tolerated.



Vladimir Gusinsky and the Phoenix Gerald Scarfe

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Gusinsky is worth as much as fifty million dollars. That does not make him the richest man in Russia, but with his media interests and political influence thrown into the equation he is certainly its most powerful private citizen. He means simultaneously to keep his secrets and yet to be noticed. Recently, he celebrated the fifth anniversary of MOST with a reception—champagne, pâté, caviar—at the Metropole Hotel. The party, according to one press report, cost two hundred thousand dollars.

The cocktail party at the Commercial Club where I was hoping to find Gu-

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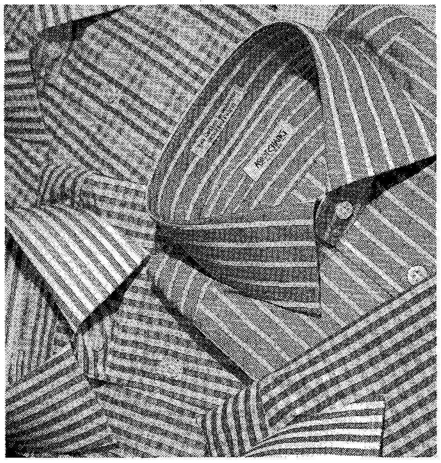

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sinsky was, by contrast, a bust. Little bunches of rich people stood around talking but still wondering why they were there. Russians like a spread. This was no spread. The champagne was warm and the hors d'œuvres were spongy and damp. It was as if the caterer had mistaken Russian businessmen for Orthodox priests.

Here and there, I heard some shoptalk, political talk, vacation talk. The tone of it, the blithe, moneyed shimmer of it, was all new to me. Living in Moscow between 1988 and 1991, I had attended diplomatic dinners, Communist Party receptions, factory cafeterias, kitchen-table talkathons—all the familiar rituals of the old regime—but never anything like this. Russian entrepreneurs? A historical instant ago, such people simply did not exist; any Russians who might have tried to become entrepreneurs would have been locked up in a psychiatric ward or in a jail cell for their efforts. While I was listening to the talk and checking out the Italian suits and the English shoes, I remembered a conversation I had had in Moscow several years ago with a young journalist named Vladimir Yakovlev. He was in his late twenties then, the grandson of a K.G.B. man, and the son of a prominent journalist who had written a dozen books on Lenin and had then taken over as the editor of *Moscow News*, a pioneering voice of glasnost. Yakovlev told me he was starting up a newspaper called *Kommersant*, and described it as "a kind of *Wall Street Journal*" for a country that barely knew what a stock was.

"*Kommersant* is a newspaper for an audience that doesn't quite exist yet," he said.

When I talked to Vladimir's father, Yegor, he said, simply, "I'm not a hardened Leninist anymore, but I have to be truthful: I don't understand my own son."

Today, the class that Vladimir Yakovlev envisioned not only exists, it thrives. *Kommersant* is said to make a fortune, and its founder is a first-generation press lord—an Ochs, a Luce.

Evidence of the new class is no longer confined to a few streets or hotels, as it was a couple of years ago. It is everywhere, in the form of billboards and television ads; the limos and the Jeeps; the new luxury stores and restaurants sprouting up all over town; the pullout business section of *Izvestia;* the mini-mansions called *kottedzhi*, on the edge of town; the foreigners roaming the hotel lobbies and ministry hallways as if looking for the next nugget from the Klondike. You see the new Russian rich in first-class lounges in airports from Vienna to Los Angeles. They fly to New York and London on business. They go on shopping runs to Paris and to the low-duty havens in the United Arab Emirates. They do their best to look like the international business set, tapping away on laptops, snapping open their cell phones. But they are fledgling rich. Sometimes the trips abroad induce pangs of class anxiety, as if they feared they were not quite getting this being-loaded thing right. Can you wear the Armani without a tie? Is the Vuitton luggage too much? To remedy their insecurity in front of the foreign moneyed classes, the Russians now have *Domovoi*, a kind of *Town & Country* primer for the plutocracy, published by *Kommersant.* Just as historians comb through back issues of *Pravda* to study the Communist era, future scholars will find *Domovoi* an artifact essential to understanding the new rich. I picked up a few issues and read articles on how to treat your maid; the splendors of Gianni Versace; how to plan your summer vacation abroad; where to get the proper furniture for your new dacha; where the best private schools are; how to evaluate high-end video equipment; where to get fantastically expensive clothes for your spoiled kids; where to shop in Tokyo; how to care for your pedigreed hounds; what's going on in Verona, Milan, Karlstad, New York, Leipzig, Geneva.

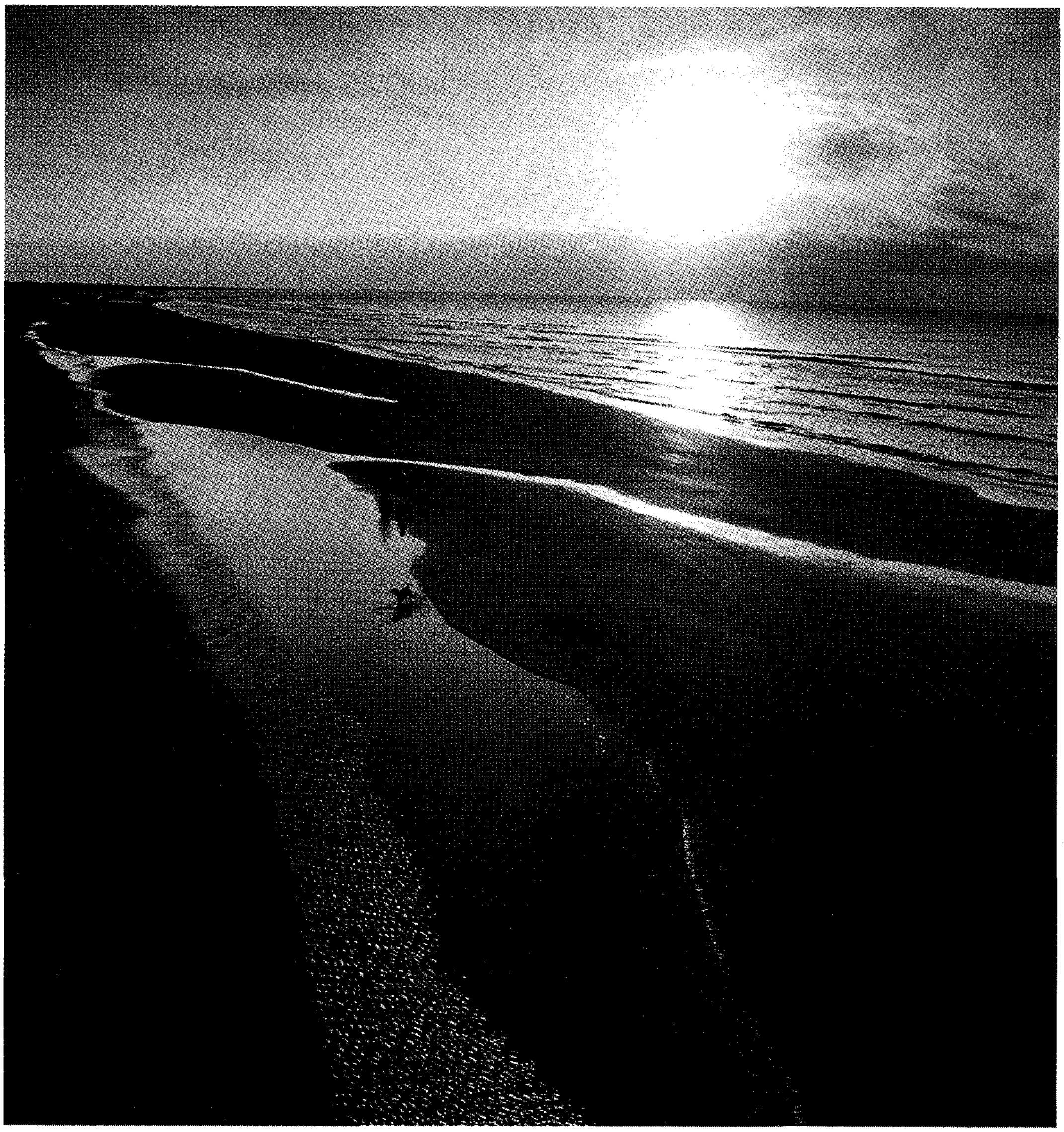
Now, at the Commercial Club, the cocktail chatter began to fizzle out. "We'll be in London to see the children," I heard one banker say.

"Why don't you fly over with us?" another said.

Then some more silence.

Near the drinks table, a very rich man stood with his very tall, very young girlfriend, saying nothing. She wore a skirt not much wider than a belt and smoked a cigarette that looked like a needle. She seemed Cubist and dangerous, somehow: dominatrix of the foreign-shopping binge. No one else bothered to stare.

Finally, the businessmen got their copies of the almanac, and they quickly turned to see how they had been described. They need not have worried. The editors had



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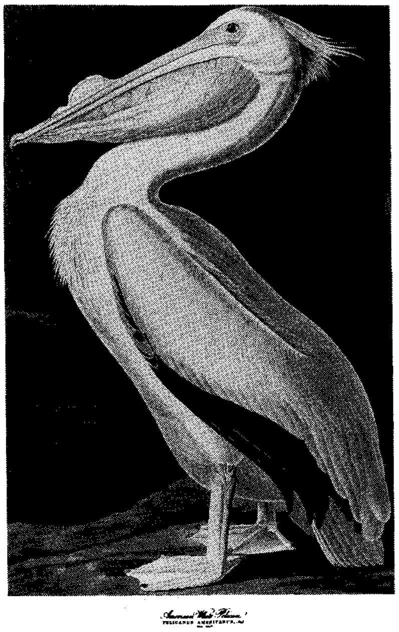

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given them the sort of fawning descriptions that a press agent might try to peddle to *Tiger Beat.*

Just before the reception broke up, a buzz whipped around the room.

"Gusinsky's men."

"I thought he was out of town again."

"He's come straight from the airport."

"Where was he? London?"

"Who knows?"

"Gusinsky . . . "

I shouldered my way to the anteroom, and there a man in aviator glasses and a ratty plaid shirt stood, smiling. He had a shlumpy, bright face. He was surrounded by men in suits paying homage.

"Volodya!"

"*Privyet!*"

They fairly swooned before him. Gusinsky took one man by the elbow and gently drew him in. The man kept nodding as Gusinsky spoke softly in his ear. Then came the next courtier and another soft-spoken exchange. After half a dozen such encounters, I finally made my way to Gusinsky, introduced myself, and asked if we could meet sometime. He said "Sure" and gave me the name of someone to call, and yet he spoke in that mock-agreeable tone of voice which usually means that it's been nice to meet you, but no, don't count on it.

OUT on the street, Gusinsky's motorcade was more impressive than any of the others. His drivers kept the engines running. His guards looked more alert, more anxious than their colleagues in the other cars.

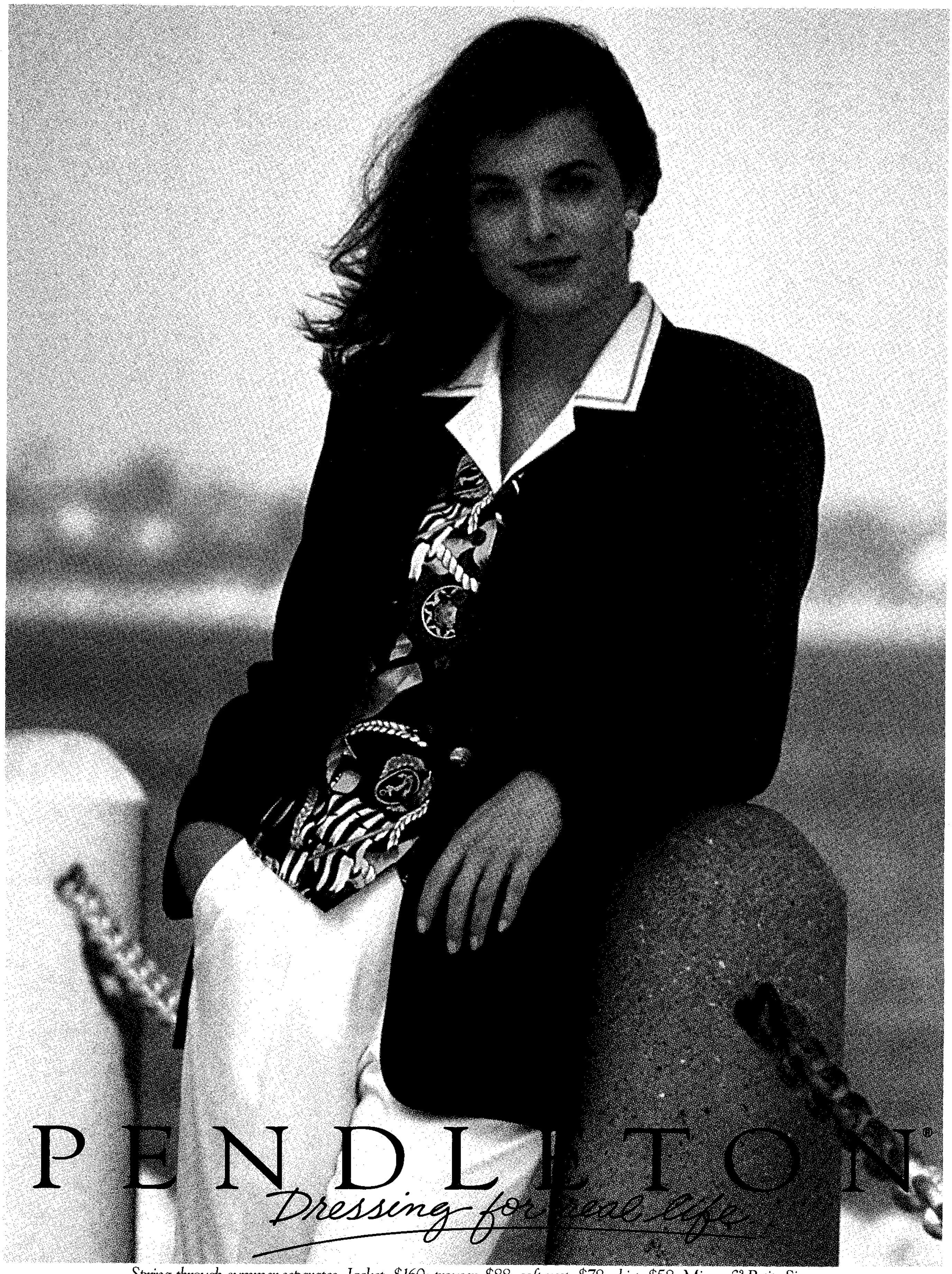
For good reason. On December 2nd, in one of the most bizarre political episodes of the post-Soviet era—one that underlined all that is chaotic and strange in Moscow these days—armed men dressed in crisp fatigues and black ski masks followed Gusinsky's cars from his dacha in the secluded Uspenskoye region, outside the city, to his headquarters, at City Hall. All along the road from the wooded outskirts to the center of town, the two sides eyed each other warily. The paramilitaries rode in unmarked cars. They wore no patches or symbols on their fatigues announcing who they were.

Once the nervous cortège arrived at City Hall, the paramilitaries, without ever identifying themselves, provoked alarm in the MOST offices. At around 5 P.M., the mysterious troops turned aggressive. Armed with Kalashnikov assault rifles, they ordered several of Gusinsky's drivers and guards to lie face down in the snow-covered parking lot and made them stay there for nearly two hours. The soldiers roughed up the leader of the MOST security team and Gusinsky's driver badly enough to send them to the hospital with broken ribs and other injuries.

From his office upstairs, Gusinsky called the Moscow police and Yevgeny Savostyanov, the chief of the Moscow regional branch of the Federal Counter-Intelligence Services (F.S.K.), which is the successor to the municipal K.G.B. Gusinsky demanded to know who was harassing his people and why. Savostyanov sent some of his own men to the scene to investigate. At City Hall, Savostyanov's F.S.K. officers discovered that the armed men were members of the guard assigned to protect the President of the Russian Federation, Boris Yeltsin. After a long discussion, the troops left the scene.

It did not take long for Gusinsky's people to understand what had happened. The commander of the Presidential guard, General Aleksandr Korzhakov, is perhaps Yeltsin's most intimate friend. For the past ten years, Yeltsin has spent more time with Korzhakov than with anyone else—except, perhaps, his wife, Naina. Korzhakov plays tennis with Yeltsin, travels with Yeltsin, plots strategy with Yeltsin, drinks with Yeltsin. In his recent memoir, "The Struggle for Russia," Yeltsin credits Korzhakov with absolute loyalty. "Aleksandr Korzhakov, my chief of security, and I have been inseparable since 1985, when I moved to Moscow," Yeltsin writes. "When I was kicked out of the Politburo in 1987, they also fired all my guards. Nevertheless, Korzhakov remained with me. He called and, just like that, asked if he could come over and keep guarding me, without pay. . . . On our days off, I sometimes visited him in his quaint little native village outside Moscow, which he affectionately called 'Buttermilkton.' There wasn't enough room for us all in his small cottage, so we set up a tent outside, and went fishing and swimming in the river. To this day, Korzhakov never leaves my side."

As Yeltsin grows increasingly isolated and his aides are more aloof from the press, it has become harder to know what is happening in the Kremlin. But, according to several knowledgeable Russian politicians and journalists I spoke with,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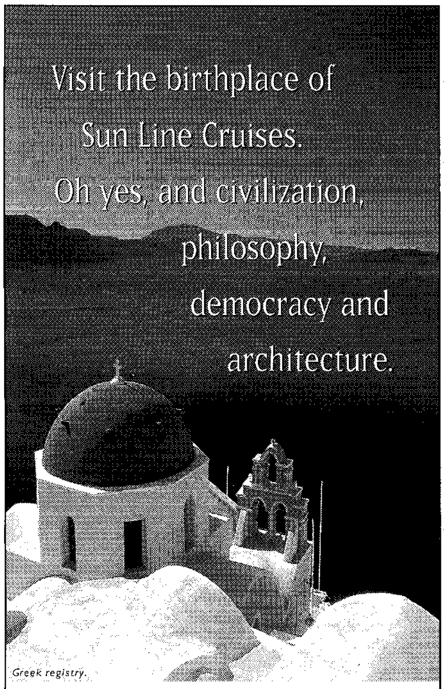

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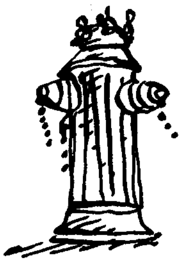
Korzhakov is a leading member of the so-called party of war—the team of Presidential advisers who have urged Yeltsin to abandon democratic niceties and use the "iron hand" to impress an electorate grown weary of chaos and cynical about the prospects for a liberal society. It was this party of war that urged Yeltsin to bombard Chechnya.

Korzhakov's presumption is extraordinary. As chief of security, he has no official function other than insuring the safety of the President, and yet he has an obvious influence on policy. Recently, he sent an urgent letter to the Prime Minister, Viktor Chernomyrdin, demanding a change in policy on oil exports. The change was made. American intelligence analysts regard Korzhakov as Yeltsin's Rasputin.

Even before the December 2nd raid, Korzhakov was known to despise Gusinsky. Now his feelings are out in the open. He has denounced Gusinsky as corrupt and a threat to political stability. Naturally, on the night of the raid Korzhakov was not about to tolerate interference from a third party like the F.S.K. Three hours after Savostyanov sent his men to find out what was going on at City Hall, he was fired from his post by Presidential decree. The dismissal was yet another blow to reform. Savostyanov had been appointed, in 1991, precisely because he came from outside the security forces; in the late nineteen-eighties, he had even worked alongside Andrei Sakharov in the pro-democracy movement.



In the aftermath of the raid, Korzhakov kept up the pressure. The next day, he tried to discredit Gusinsky in the press. In a statement relayed to the wire services Korzhakov claimed that his men had gone to MOST to investigate the possibility that the bank had helped engineer a temporary collapse of the ruble in October—an event known as Black Tuesday. (Gusinsky, for his part, says he made just forty thousand dollars—not millions, as some believe—speculating on currencies that day.) One program, the pro-Kremlin news show "Nota Bene," eagerly broadcast the official version of events, but most other outlets did not. Gusinsky's own media—NTV, *Segodnya*, and Ekho Moskvy—were critical of the raid, of course, but they were not alone. *Izvestia*, which has evolved from a Soviet propaganda organ into a remarkably independent newspaper, published a front-page article saying that Korzhakov, as the President's bodyguard, had assumed enormous and inappropriate political authority. Such abuse of power, the article suggested, "could bring on a police state."

Not long after the raid, I visited Igor Malashenko, a graduate of the old Central Committee apparatus who now runs NTV. (His office, unsurprisingly, is also in City Hall.) Malashenko, who clearly shared Gusinsky's view, said the incident had to do with an increasing paranoia in the Kremlin—fear that Yeltsin was doomed to lose the 1996 elections. Gusinsky gave many thousands of dollars to several of the pro-democracy parties for the December, 1993, election, including parties that had Yeltsin's blessing, but, now that Yeltsin's ratings have fallen, Kremlin advisers are convinced that in a Presidential race Gusinsky will put his money and media outlets behind Luzhkov or Grigory Yavlinsky, the leader of the liberal Yabloko Party. (Luzhkov has said he will not run.) "They're just terrified," Malashenko said.

Another entrepreneur, who is close to Gusinsky but is not beholden to him, told me that the raid was intended as a public show of strength. "MOST was too tightly tied to the Moscow government," he said. "It was a sign from Yeltsin to Luzhkov: 'Be careful. I'm the boss. You work as my employee. You are not an independent figure.' "

The raid, it turned out, might have been predicted. Two weeks before it happened, the official Kremlin newspaper *Rossiiskaya Gazeta* published a bizarre, unsubstantiated, and unsigned assault on MOST, headlined "SNOW IS FALLING: WILL THE PRESIDENT AND GOVERNMENT FALL?" The front-page article attacked Luzhkov and his supporters for pretending not to launch a Presidential campaign yet, at the same time, scouring the provinces for potential votes. "Secret-service sources contend that the campaign to elevate Luzhkov to the Presidency was launched, first of all, by the MOST financial group and several other banks close to the Moscow government," the article said. "Now the MOST group has its sights set on the pinnacle of power." The article accused Filipp Bobkov and other

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ex-K.G.B. figures working at MOST of "compiling files" on potential Presidential candidates. "Doubtless, these 'security people' draw information from Mafia structures that 'call the tune' when it comes to the question of giving support to Mayor Luzhkov," it said. With MOST in the forefront, the unsigned article concluded, "a moneybags party" intends to seize power in Russia.

Gusinsky denied those charges. In an interview he gave to the popular weekly *Argumenty i Fakty*, he said that the Kremlin simply could not get used to the fact that there are now new centers of influence. "The attacks on MOST began when we invested for the first time in mass media," Gusinsky said. "They all began looking for a plot." But Gusinsky's public bravado masked a private anxiety. Not long after the attack, he went with his wife and their young son to the airport to catch a flight to London, where they have an apartment. Gusinsky nearly missed his flight, because he was delayed, unaccountably, by officials at the airport. Finally, the three left, but when Gusinsky returned, a few days later, his wife and son were not with him. They were safer in London, he felt.

In mid-December, when the Russian Army began to shell Grozny, and Gusinsky's television station showed the most gruesome and damning footage, the conflict between the Kremlin and the tycoon resumed. There were rumors that Yeltsin's Security Council was considering banning NTV from the air. Gusinsky's people (and not only they) said that the attack on MOST, the war in Chechnya, the threats—all could be a pretext for establishing a state of national emergency and suspending the 1996 Presidential election.

THE business frenzy and the legal anarchy that color life in post-Soviet Russia began with the fall of the old order. In the anxious period between Yeltsin's triumph over the pitiful coup attempt in August of 1991 and the collapse of the Soviet Union four months later, on Christmas Night, interested parties—old apparatchiks, young entrepreneurs, Mafia bosses—all began to wonder about the new world that was obviously on the horizon. What would be the new arrangement of power and property? Or, as Russians have been asking for centuries, "*Kto kogo*?"—"Who beats whom?," "Who benefits?"

For over seventy years, Soviet power believed in its ability to reshape ordinary economic behavior. With the force of the police state behind it, the Communist Party outlawed private property, private farming, entrepreneurship, commercial banking, competition—in short, all the mechanisms that run modern economies. At the same time, mafiosi clans with roots going as far back as the seventeenth century, and an enormous black-market network, thrived under the sclerotic regime of Leonid Brezhnev, developing into a parallel economy. Where the inefficient and utterly corrupt command economy failed, mobsters and the shadow economy moved in. Since the state failed at almost everything but military production, Mafia clans and less formal black-marketeers were able to control innumerable markets—not merely prostitution, drugs, and gambling but spare parts, cigarettes, car sales, and food distribution. Even in the last year of Communism, 1991, the shadow economy was the most efficient distributor of goods, and it accounted for revenues estimated at more than sixty billion dollars.

In mid-December of 1991, with the dissolution of the Soviet Union just days away, thirty of the biggest organized-crime leaders in the empire held a summit meeting at a dacha outside Moscow. The subject was the mob's position in the new order. Many Communist Party officials prepared themselves for the coming collapse by turning themselves into private businessmen. They became consultants, rainmakers, men who could use their influence and their access to bureaucratic power to cash in. Even some of the members of the would-be junta in 1991—a group pledged to the maintenance of a Communist system—went into business as bankers or industrialists after their coup failed. It turned out, though, that the top mobsters—the *Vory v Zakonye*, or Thieves in Law—had an even keener sense of the post-Soviet future than the politicians had. They foresaw that the collapse of the Communist Party and its imperial control over the economy—over prices, production, wages, everything—would lead to an economic free-for-all unprecedented in modern history. As Stephen Handelman points out in his re-

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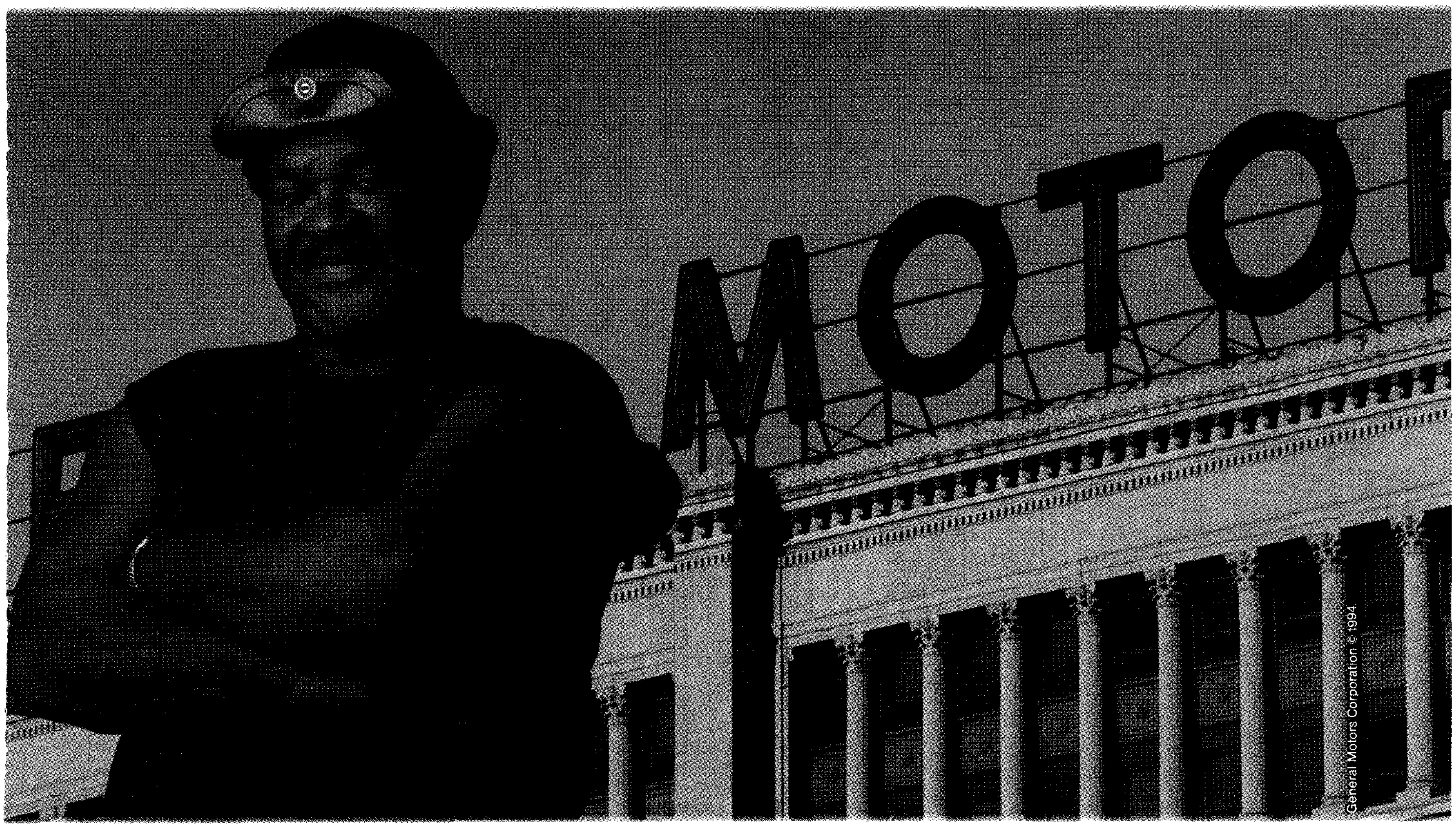

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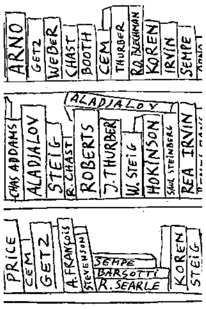
For Cornell Cherry, a UAW assistant team coordinator at the GM Powertrain Division, quality isn't some corporate slogan. He knows the competition. He knows that if General Motors doesn't deliver outstanding vehicles, customers will look somewhere else. Cornell says, "The managers understand I'm not just a warm body. I'm a thinking individual who has a mind how to run the business." GM has thousands of people like Cornell Cherry, working hard to do the job right. Finding ways to do it better. Quality is something they take very seriously. After all, it's their bread and butter.

markable forthcoming book, "Comrade Criminal," the mobsters at that meeting knew that the collapse of the Soviet Union would bring decay and uncertainty, but they also knew that in chaos there would be possibility.

As things have worked out, the police state has turned into what Russians call *bespredel*, meaning anarchy, lawlessness, limitless greed. The temptations now are enormous and unchecked. There are resources to smuggle, money to launder, currency games to play, territories to control. Because the stakes are so high, the traditional Thieves in Law have grown wildly competitive and brutal. The old spheres of influence in cities like Moscow are battlefields, with groups from Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Chechnya fighting with Russians, Jews, and Ukrainians. Mob hits are a commonplace: shootings, stabbings, car bombings.



By now, most people in the West have a good sense, from the press, of the increased visibility and menace of the post-Soviet Mafia: they have seen the films of the young thugs and their molls in spandex miniskirts strolling through the casinos of Perm or Volgograd; they have seen the photographs of police checking out the latest murder scene—Moscow as Dodge City, or as Chicago in the twenties. The images, however, represent the most obvious ills of post-Soviet economic life. There are also the vagaries of would-be legitimate businesses trying to operate in a wild landscape, and there is the problem of a vast bureaucracy that remains in place and invariably wants its taste of the profits. It is this shadowland of legal chaos, the overlap of commerce and government, that is less understood and at least as important as the presence of organized crime.

The moral ambiguity of business relations in Russia is, for those who live with it, a given. Ask a banker, a politician, and a human-rights worker whether this or that businessman is honest, and they will all give the same answer: In the standard sense of the word, honesty does not—*cannot*—exist in Russian business today. Tax rates are so confiscatory that no business could pay in full and stay open. The legal system simply has no working provisions for many of the most ordinary aspects of business. Contracts are signed and routinely broken. Laws on bidding procedures or on conflict of interest barely exist.

The state is still the unavoidable factor in economic life. Despite the fall of the old imperial structures, the bureaucracy has only expanded—and, what is worse, it seems that it has gone into business for itself. Bribery is a fact of business life. Under both czarist and Soviet rule, bureaucrats always took bribes and accepted certain privileges as their due. But there were limits. In Gogol's "The Inspector General," the local prefect dresses down a police officer not because he stole but because he stole more than his due. The Communist Party, in its time, also regulated greed according to unspoken, yet well-understood, standards. The General Secretary got this much meat, his deputy a bit less, and so on all the way down the line. Now there are no such limits. "It's as if everyone had privatized or marketized himself," Mikhail Leontiev, the economics columnist for *Segodnya*, told me one day in his office. "Army officers in charge of a tank division, judges who rule on corruption cases, bureaucrats who control licenses—anyone with something to 'sell'—now act as if they were in private business. The situation here is worse than it is in Colombia. There is no border between the legal and the illegal."

But to view all business in Russia as organized crime is not right, either. Igor Bunin, the general director of the Center for Political Technologies, a think tank that has studied the behavior of businessmen in post-Soviet Russia, told me that in his wide experience of interviewing and polling businessmen he had found that seventy-five per cent of them consider themselves legitimate and yet concede that bribery is habitual and, for better or worse, a necessary part of commerce. To ask the average businessman whether he has paid bribes is considered somehow childish, prudish. He will issue a routine denial, for the record, and then give you a scathing look. "Pay bribes?" the look says. "How could I stay in business otherwise?" It's as if you had asked him whether he cheats the rain by wearing a raincoat.

The "privatized" bureaucrat demanding cash for a signature is sometimes the least of a tycoon's concerns. The more dangerous question is one of protection. Russian bankers, especially, often worry about the threat of violence, even of contract killers hired by organized-crime figures or perhaps by rival bankers. "Ten to fifteen thousand dollars and you are gone," one financier told the weekly *Moscow News* recently. Most businessmen pay mobsters for their protection, or what they call a *krysha*—a roof. The super-rich build their own roofs, hiring private bodyguards from the ranks of the special forces in the military or the Interior Ministry police. In this, Gusinsky was the pioneer. His security force now has its own training school. He pays his guards top salaries—far more than they would get in the Army—and, in return, they are loyal to him.

One afternoon, I paid a visit to Gavriil Popov, a former professor of economics at Moscow State University who was elected mayor of Moscow as a democratic reformer in 1991 and resigned the next year. Popov is still close to his former No. 2, Luzhkov, and, like Gusinsky, has an office in City Hall. Moscow journalists often describe Popov as rich and shady, but they have been no more successful in proving their case against him than they have been in proving one against Luzhkov or Gusinsky. Popov, who is round and friendly, acts cute. When I asked him if he ever benefitted monetarily as mayor, he tucked in his chins and smiled. "Of course not," he said, still smiling. "After all, wealthy people here do not quit their jobs. They struggle to hold on to them." When the conversation did not concern his own days as mayor, Popov described the business world with a kind of amoral insouciance. He did not have a bad word to say about anyone.

But other officials and executives are more direct about the oversize role of personal contacts between entrepreneurs and government bureaucrats. "To become a millionaire in our country, it is not at all necessary to have a good head and specialized knowledge," Pyotr Aven, a former minister of foreign trade, who is now the president of the Alpha Bank, told the *Moscow News*. "Often it is enough to have active support in the government, the Parliament, local power structures, and law-enforcement agencies. One fine day, your insignificant bank is authorized to conduct operations with budgetary funds, for instance. Or quotas for the export of oil, timber, and gas are generously allotted to your company, which is in no way con-

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When I asked Popov about the situation, however, he shrugged. MOST, I said, has its headquarters in City Hall, it has a large share of the city's account, it does real-estate deals with the city—isn't there a problem there? "Someone like Gusinsky is an entrepreneur in league with the bureaucracy, and I don't think there's anything criminal about that," Popov said. "In the situation now, a private entrepreneur cannot handle a big business on his own."

IN an ambiguous political world, Vladimir Gusinsky may be the most ambiguous figure of all. Western intelligence analysts trying to understand Gusinsky's business practices and political role in the new Russia find themselves almost at a loss. They cannot seem to read him. As a media tycoon who has undermined the government monopoly on television, Gusinsky has served an invaluable function. NTV's coverage of the Russian assault on Chechnya has been as bold and unrelenting as the best American coverage of Vietnam. Gusinsky has also kept his distance from his media properties; in one case, *Segodnya* published a scathing article on a Kremlin economics official, which probably cost MOST millions in potential business. Some of his journalists, whom I've known since long before the rise of Gusinsky, say their boss has given them such a free hand that they are not sure he is even reading *Segodnya* or watching NTV very carefully.

Gusinsky claims that by creating jobs he is helping to form a middle class and a civil society. This is an essential point. In "Russia Under the Old Regime," the historian Richard Pipes points out, "Russia's inability to produce a large and vigorous bourgeoisie is usually seen as a major cause of its deviation from the political patterns of western Europe, and of the failure of liberal ideas significantly to influence its political institutions and practices." Businessmen like Gusinsky argue that the threat of a renewed totalitarianism in Russia is rooted in national humiliation and economic uncertainty; a nation of shopkeepers or farmers or computer programmers—a middle class—would not be likely to vote a Fascist into the Kremlin, they say.

At the same time, Gusinsky can be elusive about his business and disingenuous about some of the people he employs. When he feels he is under unfair attack, he lashes out—or his lawyers do. Gusinsky sued a *Wall Street Journal* freelancer and the paper recently for a column in the European edition that made an issue of MOST's employment of ex-K.G.B. men. I asked Yegor Gaidar, the former Prime Minister, if Gusinsky was perhaps a Russian Carnegie—a fairly innocuous question, I thought—and he preferred to keep quiet. "Mr. Gusinsky is a living person," Gaidar said. "He can sue me if he doesn't like the comparison."

Until the Gorbachev era, Vladimir Gusinsky was no one special. Like Yuri Lyubimov, of the Taganka, he was a theatre director, adept at the mechanics of pulling a production together, but he lacked Lyubimov's wit and daring. As has since become clear, Gusinsky's talents lay in forging personal connections, calculating costs and benefits, taking financial risks; in other words, he was a natural businessman in a country where business was prohibited. But his talents would have their day. Gorbachev, after his first two years in office, introduced a series of decrees permitting, for the first time in more than half a century, some of the trappings of business life. The Communist Party sanctioned foreign investment and a form of limited private enterprise known as *kooperativy*. Gusinsky got in fast. Business would be his theatre.

During those early perestroika days, Gusinsky cultivated friends everywhere: in the Soviet Cultural Fund (presided over by Raisa Gorbachev), in the Ministry of Foreign Economic Relations, and, soon, in Moscow's City Hall. His connections made it easier for him to travel abroad and meet foreign businessmen. Working with APCO Associates, then a division of the Washington-based law firm Arnold & Porter, Gusinsky began a joint venture that operated as a consulting firm: with the help of his American partners, he advised foreign clients on potential markets in the Soviet Union. For forty or fifty thousand dollars, say, he might advise a Western food chain where and how to build a hard-currency grocery store to serve the foreign community in Moscow. Though Gusinsky's political opponents have accused him of every sin imaginable, there is no proof that he was, or is, guilty of any wrongdoing. His enemies make assumptions. Even in the relatively innocent days of the late nineteen-eighties, there were hardly any rules governing the nascent business world. The easiest corners to cut were taxes (by shortchanging the collector) and currency regulations (since trading dollars for rubles on the black market was easy and highly profitable). That was the world he lived in.

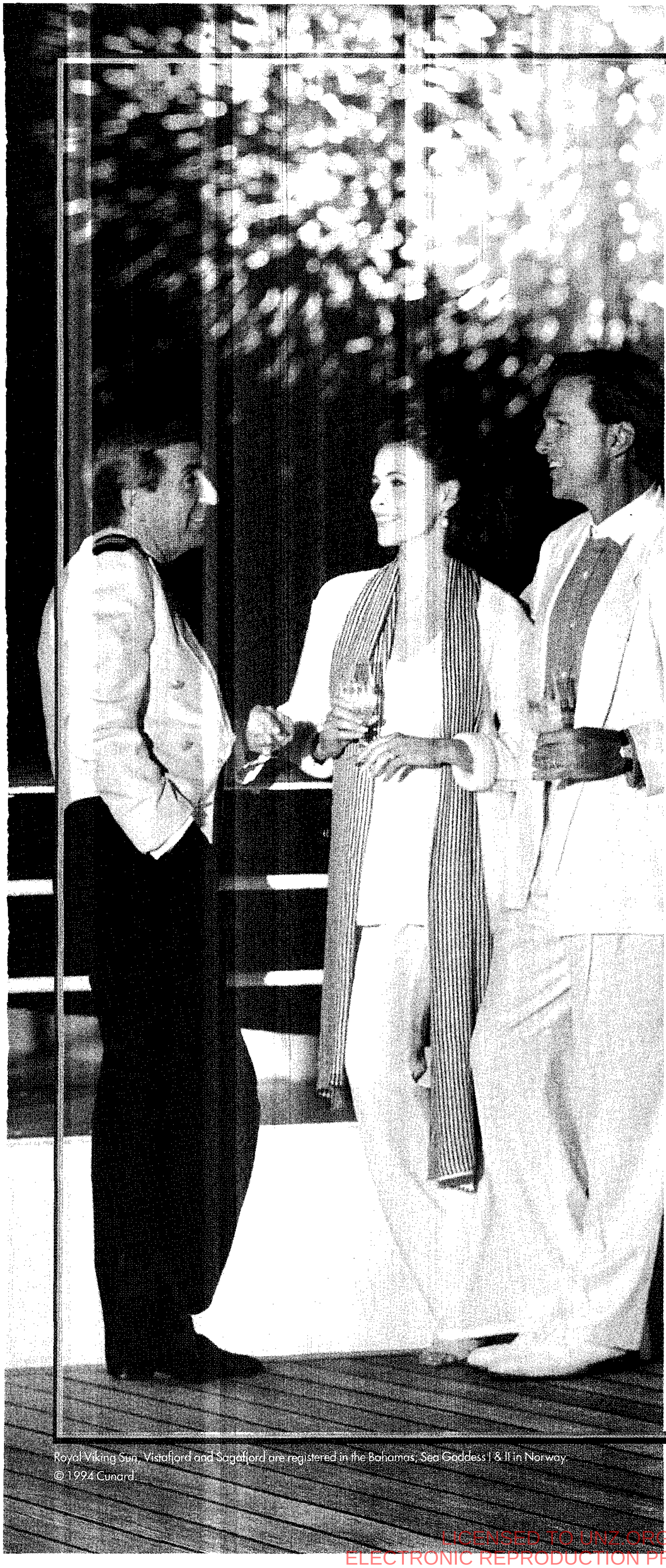
BAPNEY
TAXI

From the start, Gusinsky showed a flair for entrepreneurial mythmaking. Like many American pioneers of business, he knew the value of a charming starting-out story. Nearly all Russians believe that the name of his bank and holding company—MOST—is intended to mean "bridge," as it does in Russian. Not quite. One afternoon, when Gusinsky was visiting his American partners, he spotted an incredible sight on the streets of downtown Washington: people were lining up to remove stacks of greenbacks from a small computer stuck into a wall. Gusinsky, who understood little English at the time, listened as the Americans explained the concept of an automatic-teller machine. Gusinsky inspected it more closely.

"MOST," read one of the decals near the machine.

Not long afterward, Gusinsky split with his American partners and developed his commercial bank. He bought up dozens of properties around Moscow to refurbish and then sell at prices many times their cost. He also popularized something virtually unknown in Russia: the credit card. One of MOST's first advertisements read, simply, "What a convenient world!"

JUDGING by that first meeting with Gusinsky, at the Moscow Commercial Club, I did not think he would sit for an interview. But, perhaps because he felt himself to be under such fierce political attack in Moscow and in need of public attention, I did get a chance to meet with him. Gusinsky's people told me that



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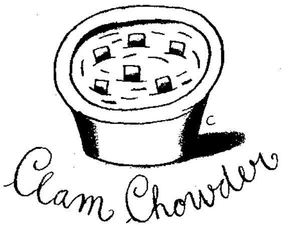
at such-and-such a time I should go to the main door at City Hall—the door outside which Comrade Korzhakov's Presidential guard had brandished their Kalashnikovs on December 2nd. I arrived on schedule, and what followed was, from the first, an unsettling experience. MOST's advertisements around Moscow are meant to reassure the customer, by bringing him slowly into the new world of compound interest and credit cards. One billboard shows a plant breaking through the soil. The caption reads, "A Natural Phenomenon." Yet there is something unnatural, or unnerving, about MOST headquarters. Walking through the lobby, I saw dozens of guards in fatigues, rifles slung over their arms. They slumped on couches watching cartoons on television. One of Gusinsky's friendly and efficient press representatives took me to the elevators and on up to MOST's offices, on the twenty-first floor.



Upstairs, the scene was even more bizarre. A few years ago, in the first flush of private business, secretaries usually dressed like streetwalkers, and executives like John Gotti. But this could easily have been a suite on Wall Street: well-dressed executives and secretaries were walking with extreme purpose and talking in rushed whispers; everything was buffed, sleek, quick, secure. After a short wait, Gusinsky greeted the two of us in his office. This time, he was decked out in a well-tailored suit. He stood taller, in business mode. From the start, he was disarmingly, self-consciously open, as friendly as could be. His office had a panoramic view of Moscow, and yet the interior seemed deliberately intended to resemble some other office—an English broker's office, perhaps. We sat on couches and in armchairs around a coffee table. I put out a tape recorder; so did Gusinsky's press representative. I began by asking Gusinsky about his ambitions as a businessman, beyond money or influence. Did he see himself as a Russian Henry Ford?

"I am in this first generation of entrepreneurs, and there are already second and third generations formed, each with their own attitudes," Gusinsky said. "The first wave began with people who were one-hundred-per-cent creations of the system. Many of them tried to make some quick money and then hide it all. They were scared of Soviet banditry. Their minds were very closed, especially in the first years of the coöperative movement. At that time, people thought they were building something like a society 'with a human face,' as if personal goals, like making some money for yourself and your children, were not sufficient.

"I would say that about eighty per cent of that first wave that made some money went abroad—the nouveau-riche money wave, I call it. They left because they didn't trust the state. They didn't think things could last. But those who stayed are now in key positions. . . . I myself was connected to the Ministry of Foreign Economic Relations. Our coöperative was under their auspices. In those days, everyone needed a government patron to 'raise' him. The act of entrepreneurship consisted of establishing a good patron—just as in any bureaucratic system. My patrons from the ministry now work here with us."

And the second wave of business?

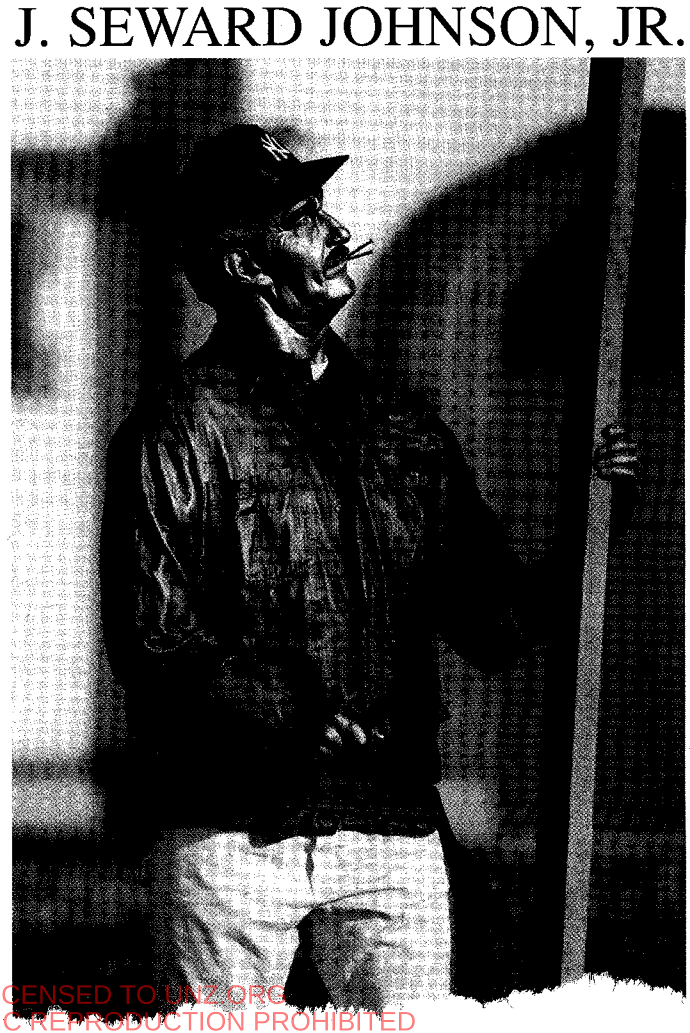
"The second wave was the toughest and most criminalized," Gusinsky went on. "They were people who came to the market on a wave of aggression. We have to reap the fruits of their criminal activities. We feel it, and you feel it, too, in the West. These are tough, criminal people. Some of the people who emigrated earlier left because of these criminals. I know many people who said to themselves, 'Why should I risk my life and the lives of my family? I'd rather leave.' "

The third wave "is different," he said. "It is perfectly legal. These are young people who came to the fore in the last two years. They are fearless and are not involved in criminality. They are normal people, well educated, full of energy."

All I'd been hearing in Moscow, I said—including what I'd heard from Gusinsky's acquaintance Gavriil Popov, the former mayor—was that under the current conditions there was no clear line between legal and illegal business, and I asked, What does honesty mean in Russian business?

Gusinsky assumed an indignant expression. "It's exactly the same difference between honesty and criminality that exists in the United States," he said. "Please, understand this. Criminal business is based on the gains of illegal business. It's not about decreasing taxes. It's about avoiding taxes entirely. It's about extortion. Isn't this the case in New York? It's not a purely Russian thing. In Russia, this wave has been much bigger than anywhere else, because democracy is for all—for normal citizens and for gangsters alike." The reason he had hired so many security people was "to oppose these organized signs of the criminal world," he said.

"There is an unequivocal understanding that the only way you can defend yourself against the lawlessness is through an investment in politics," he went on. "Our thinking would be different if our only goals were to make money and emigrate. Then we wouldn't care. We would just give bribes, corrupt some more bureaucrats, and do as we please. This is why in the December elections last year big business structures began to invest, to finance politics. The politicization of Russian entrepreneurship is a diffuse mechanism aimed against Russian lawlessness. It's not that we want to become politicians. We are forced to politicize because it serves our interests—not so much the interests of our individual companies as the interests of all who want to live an ordinary life, all who want to live and not be attacked, as we were on December 2nd."


J. SEWARD JOHNSON, JR.

people who served in the Army," he said.

But why such a huge security force—about eleven hundred people?

"The government does not fulfill its most basic functions, like the minimal insurance of security," Gusinsky said. "It is simply unable to do it. In some cases, this happens in the West. Big companies everywhere can have their own security companies, the way they have their own analytical services. It's just that our security service is a little bigger than some others. Our security service works for MOST and is also hired out to clients. This, too, is a commercial activity."

I was still curious about why Gusinsky, with all his interests in banking and real estate, bothered with media properties. NTV, for example, is a fifteen-million-dollar investment, according to one of its executives, and no one has been willing to imitate him in investing in media. Igor Malashenko, who runs NTV, had told me that television turned out to be an "incredibly profitable" business and that Gusinsky could expect to make money on his investment "very soon." But there is no guarantee that the Kremlin will let that happen.

"Media are business, and NTV is good business," Gusinsky declared. "Newspapers may not be such [illegible] business [illegible] the time [illegible] has great potential as a print market."

A secretary performed the trick of serving coffee and tea, cookies, and candy, without interrupting her boss. Gusinsky raised one eyebrow to indicate gratitude, and then she was gone. The only time Gusinsky seemed to abandon his attempt to be charming was when the issue of his increasing hostility to the Yeltsin government and its hostility to him came up.

"Something is going on in the Kremlin, but we don't know what it is," he said. "The Kremlin is a black box, and we don't know what's going on inside it, but we can tell that something is wrong. We begin to see that a person with power can begin to say to himself, 'Why do we need elections? Maybe we will not win? What then? I am the one who is leading the country on a democratic path. What if the Communists happen to win? So let's arrange it so that there are no elections.' Such is the temptation, the temptation to preserve power. . . .

"Until this very last moment, we have supported Yeltsin and all the other democratically inclined movements. The Stolichny and Menatep banks have, too—in fact, nearly all the banks have. This is the way it used to be, but now is the moment of truth. Our support will depend on a lot of things. Look at Gaidar, who has always supported Yeltsin—but [illegible]

At one point, I asked if the attack on MOST on December 2nd had been a message from the Kremlin.

Gusinsky leaned forward in his chair and frowned. "There are easier ways of sending a message," he said. "This was a demonstration that a time of unlimited lawlessness is coming."

He went on, "Six months or a year ago, I thought we'd move ahead very quickly—Russia's potential is great—but now I can't say this. I'm not so sure if we'll proceed much further. There can be no economic progress without democratic freedom, and no democratic freedoms without institutions of a free market."

After a while, Gusinsky glanced at his watch. His press people glanced at their watches.

One last question, I said. What sort of advice would you give to foreigners who want to come to Russia and do business?

This time, Gusinsky smiled, but there was still no amusement in his expression. "A very simple piece of advice," he said. "Be very careful. Russia is a country with huge potential. But one has to be very careful."

GUSINSKY'S view of himself—that he and other businessmen will create a middle class and a civil society—is not the prevailing view. Millions of Russians feel that they are worse off now than they

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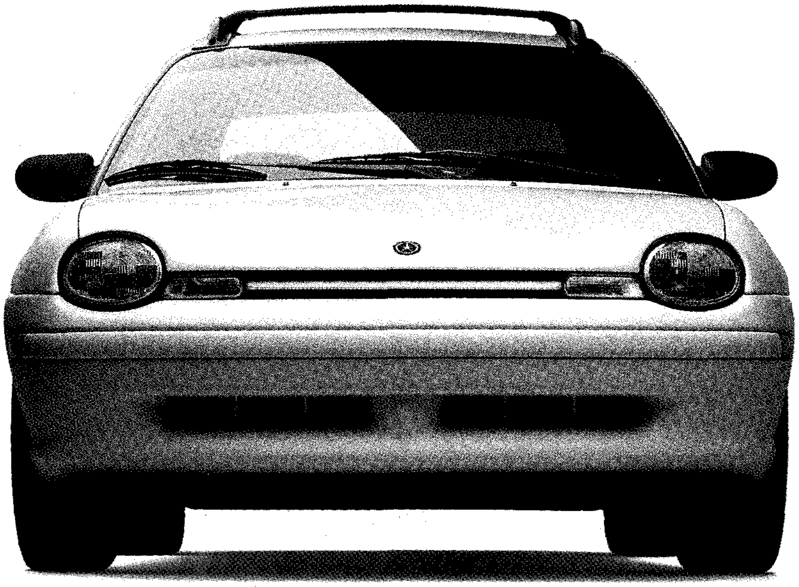

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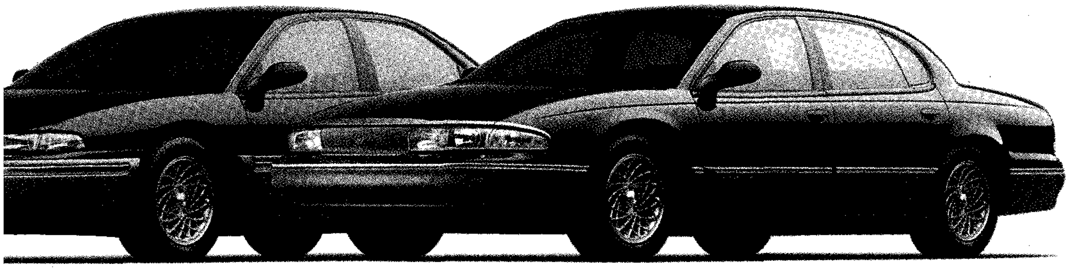

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quick to point out the non-Russianness of many of the new entrepreneurs. Mikhail Poltoranin, who until recently was in Yeltsin's inner circle, referred darkly to "prison-camp Hebrew"—presumably the language used by Gusinsky and his media. Gusinsky is Jewish. He has been insistently open about his background, including the fact that one of his grandfathers was executed under Stalin and one of his grandmothers served a term in the Gulag.

Moscow businessmen are trying to repair their image and establish themselves as a political interest group. In mid-December, Gusinsky and several other powerful business figures organized a one-day Congress of Russian Entrepreneurs at the Hall of Columns—the site of Stalin's funeral—and MOST doled out passes to the press. By early morning, the hall was filling up with businesspeople from all over the country: oilmen from western Siberia, gas and chemical executives from the Urals, bankers from everywhere. One speaker after another made the same series of points: no matter what the rest of the country or the world might think, the new wave of Russian entrepreneurs craves a legal order; chaos is bad for the country and bad for business.

In the hallways, some of the richest people in Russia stood around kibbitzing. I ran into one of the great conversion acts in recent times: Svyatoslav Fyodorov, a renowned eye surgeon, had been a member of the Communist Party Central Committee under Gorbachev and is now a Moscow tycoon. He still runs a huge clinic, but he's also into real-estate investments and casino gambling. To some degree, Fyodorov looked the way he did in his earlier incarnation—a crewcut, slightly Asian eyes, tugged-down mouth—but he also wore the best suit this side of Bond Street: a cashmere navy number, cut just so. Before I could ask him a question, he went into an angry set piece.

"This country needs a Franklin Roosevelt, a government of revival and reconstruction," Fyodorov said. "Look at what he faced in 1933: terrible inflation, anarchy, the collapse of society, isolationism. Roosevelt created the economic conditions for recovery. With our intellectual capacity, we could do the same thing. Surely our capacities here are at least what the capacities were in the United States in the nineteen-thirties. The government is now playing the role of the destroyer. The

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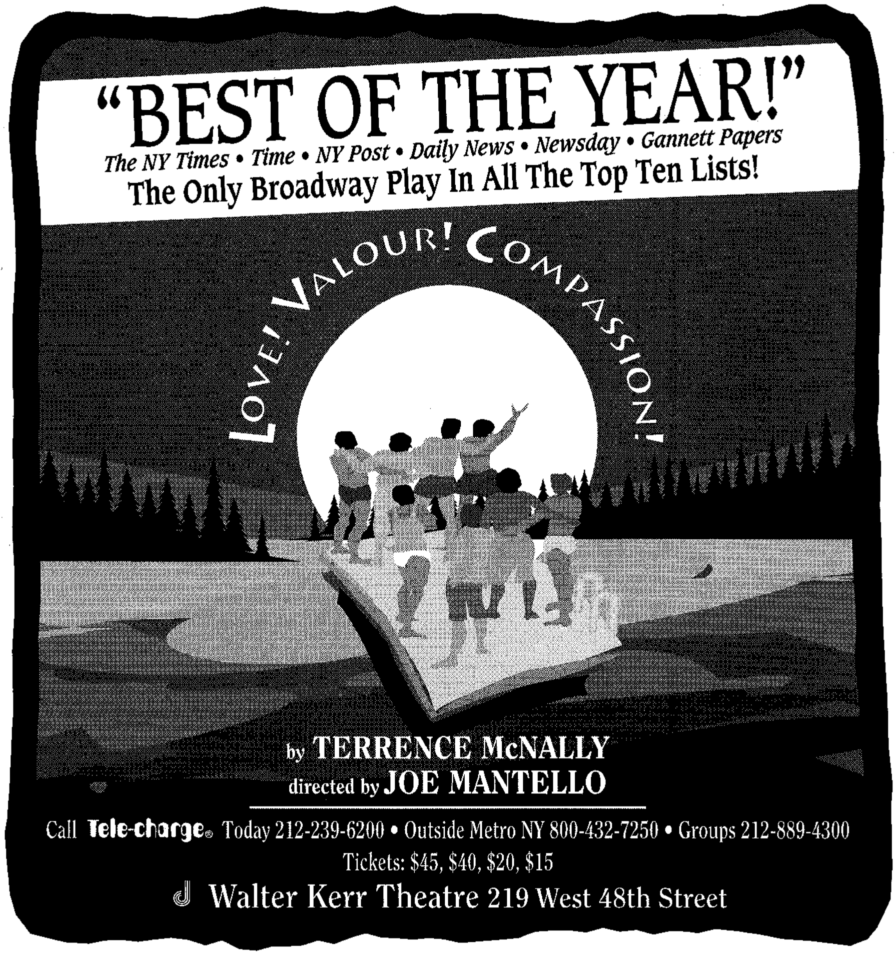
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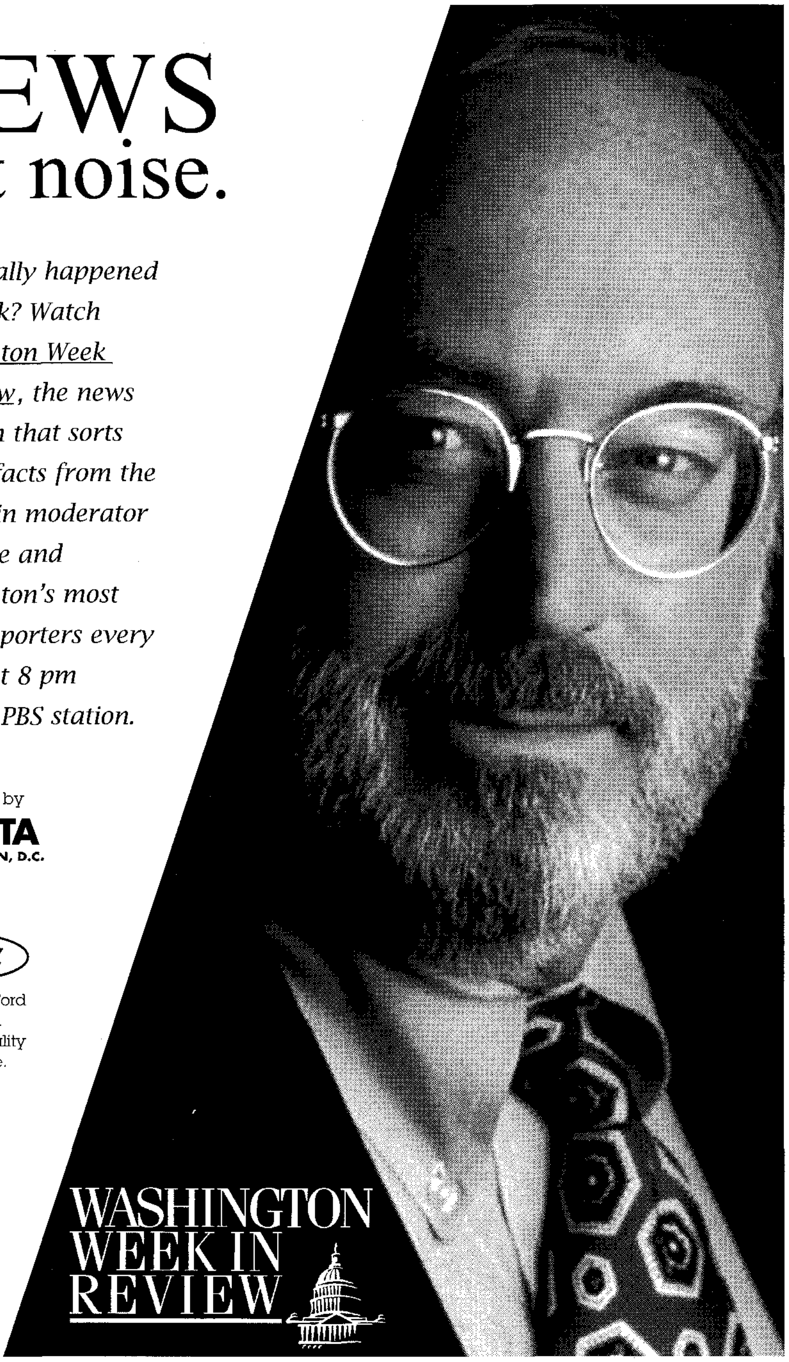

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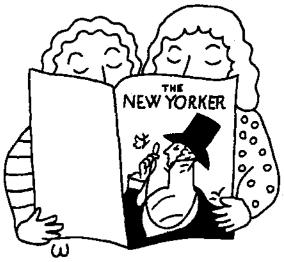

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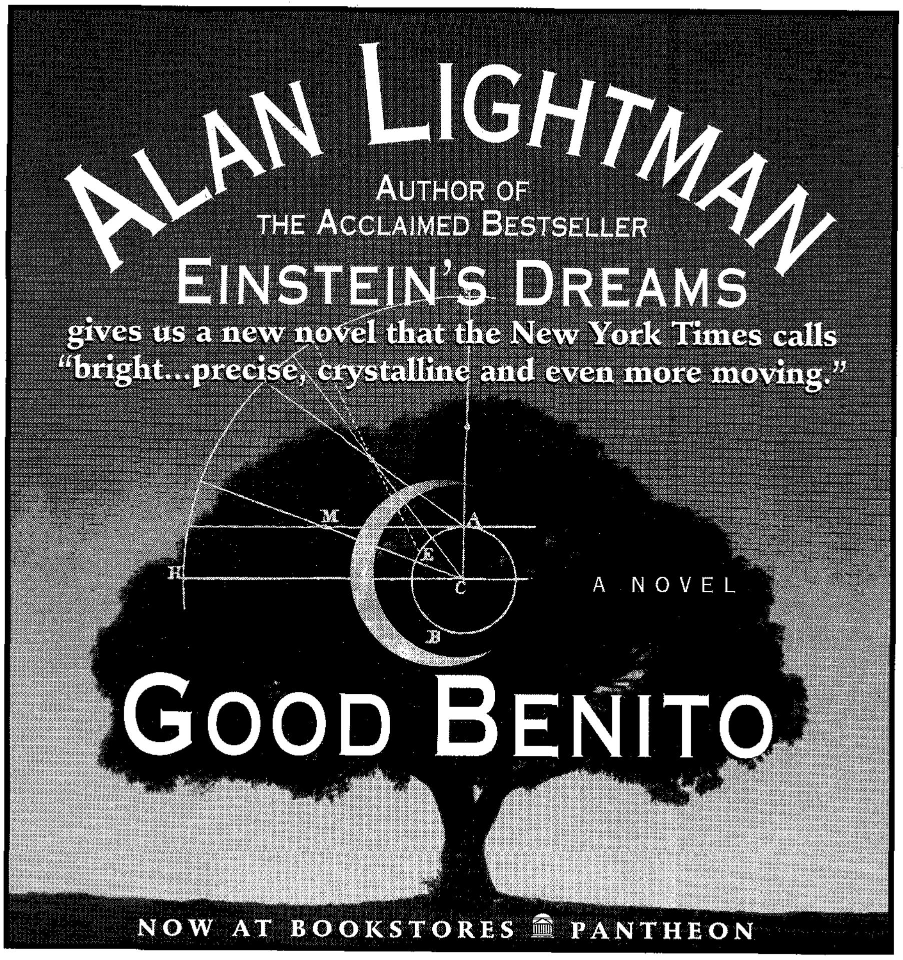

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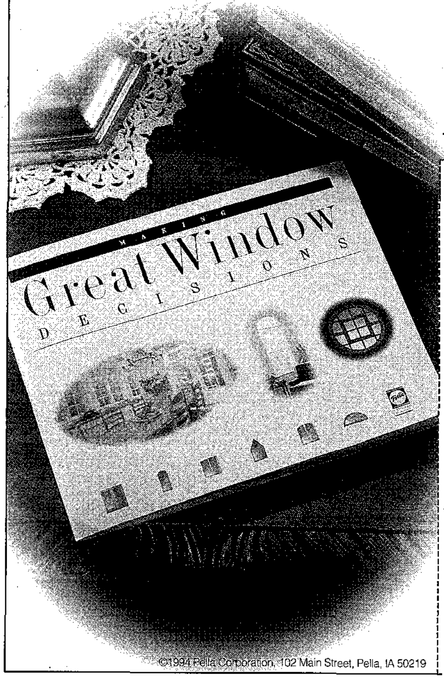

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ently from the way they did in the West in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Here we have no generations. We have people who themselves change from year to year. But we do have many of the same problems. They had criminals, lies—everything we have today. It's very similar. The Rockefellers cut pipelines, and all the rest. The difference is that all this is now happening in a quite developed country, like Russia. Rockefeller established an economic structure, while we here are dividing up a preëxisting one."

I asked if the dividing up had led to an oligarchy in Russia.

"It would be *nice* to have an oligarchy in Russia," Bendukidze said, laughing. "Civil society is the only way toward developed economics. So in the meantime we must create substitutes for civil society. Oligarchy is a substitution for civil society. It's better than monarchy. It's not exactly totalitarianism. It would be nice to have a General Pinochet to help us, but we don't have a General Pinochet. You see, historically, when there is a ruined economy, you can't develop a new economy without occupation or dictatorship. Look at Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, Japan. What we do not need is elections. In general, we are not ready to elect the people who need to be elected. . . . Unfortunately, I don't know who our General Pinochet is or could be. Yeltsin is better than change, though. Who can be sure of sure change, smooth change? Can you be sure that the next person will not be even less successful than Yeltsin? I fear a more radical person, a crazy nationalist."

Then I asked the expectable, liberal question. Wouldn't the suspension of elections simply push democracy farther into the future, making it even more of an illusion than it already is?

"Democracy is not an illusion, unfortunately," Bendukidze said. "There are moments in history when you can push history too far. Look at the success of the National Socialist Party in Germany in 1933. They came to power through democratic procedures. But if there had been an anti-democratic power in Germany it would have been better for the German people."

As it turns out, no one will have to be more careful than Vladimir Gusinsky. In late January, as the Kremlin scaled back its brutal siege of Chechnya, it reopened the front against MOST. Yeltsin kept silent on the matter, but his trusted guard and friend Korzhakov lashed out. Under the pretense of announcing that he had "never taken part in politics," Korzhakov gave a blatantly political interview to *Argumenty i Fakty* in which he accused MOST of corruption and "frightening the public" with talk of a police state.

"The threat to society is not posed by the security service," Korzhakov said, "but by those members of the financial Mafia who shamelessly and arrogantly parade around the center of Moscow carrying weapons right outside the mayor's office—from the same financial Mafia that is breeding a new generation of politicians and striving to set up a pocket government of people who are buying up state bureaucrats and pursuing their own selfish interests at the expense of the fatherland."

The publicity about Korzhakov's own involvement in politics had come only after December 2nd, he insisted, and the source was "a flock of geese and highly placed people linked with them." Since *gus'* means "goose" in Russian, Korzhakov made it clear he was talking about Gusinsky, and he added, "Hunting geese is an old hobby of mine."

Three days later, another paper, *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* (*Independent Newspaper*), ran a front-page story under a triple-stack headline:

THE MOST GROUP EXPECTS GREAT UNPLEASANTNESS:
MAJOR GENERAL KORZHAKOV ANNOUNCES
GOOSE-HUNTING SEASON HAS OPENED.

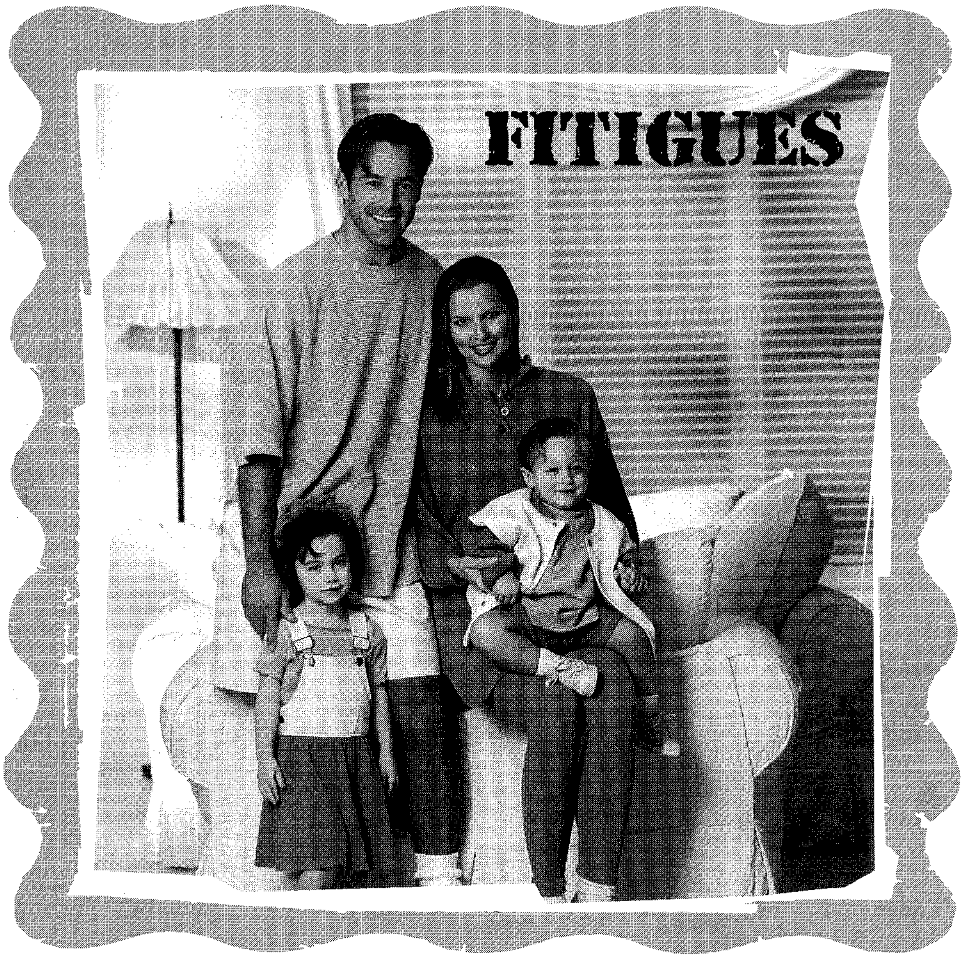
For MOST, the news was ominous. The story read:

> A well-informed source at the Kremlin has told *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* that one of the Russian special services will soon take measures aimed at weakening the position of Vladimir Gusinsky in international and Russian banking circles. It is expected that as a result there could be a discontinuation of correspondent links between European financial establishments and MOST Bank, a pushing aside of major foreign and Russian clients, massive withdrawals of deposits, and refusal of interbank credits.
>
> Investigations reflecting negatively on the activities of the MOST Group and its connections among politicians, businessmen, bureaucrats and heads of "force structures" are being prepared for publication in newspapers and videotaped television pieces. After public opinion has been worked up, the General Prosecutor's office may sanction the arrest of very highly placed officers for corruption and abuse of office and of various financiers for buying the coöperation of law-enforcement organs.
>
> It has become known that Vladimir Gusinsky, who is living in London, has been placed under the tight control of the Russian secret services abroad. There is an investigation under way of his private bank accounts. . . .

In addition, the article said, the government will try to get the British to extradite Gusinsky, and may even appeal to Prime Minister John Major to do so: "And after that, Lefortovo Prison and a show trial of Moscow's financial genius."

While *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* did not reveal its Kremlin source, Gusinsky showed every sign of believing the report. To begin his response, he plans to take the President's bodyguard to court. "We believe that what Mr. Korzhakov said constitutes a physical threat aimed at the leadership of MOST," Gusinsky said.

Gusinsky also told the paper, by telephone from England, that he would stay abroad "for a little while." He expects to return. ♦



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LOOKING
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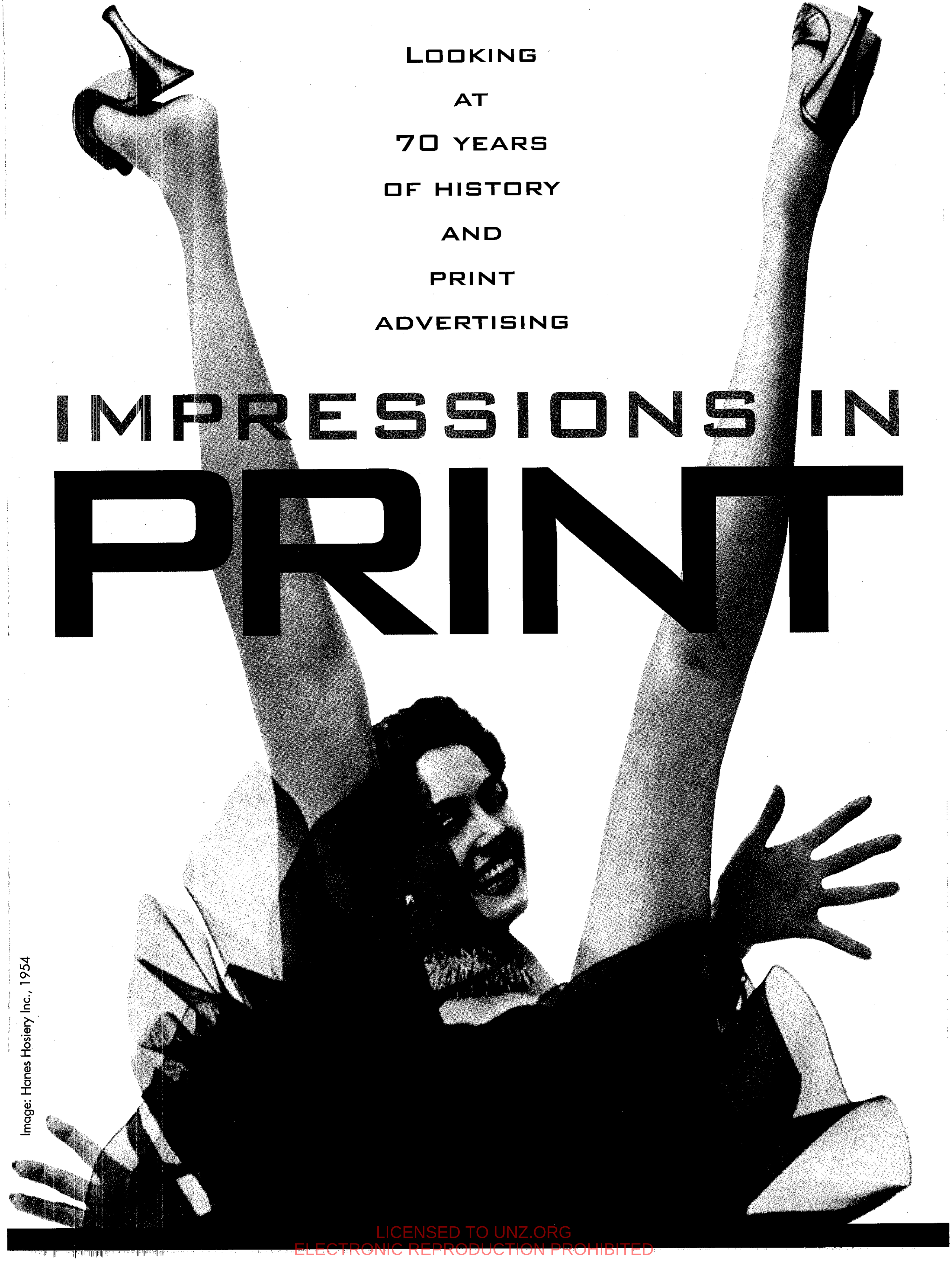
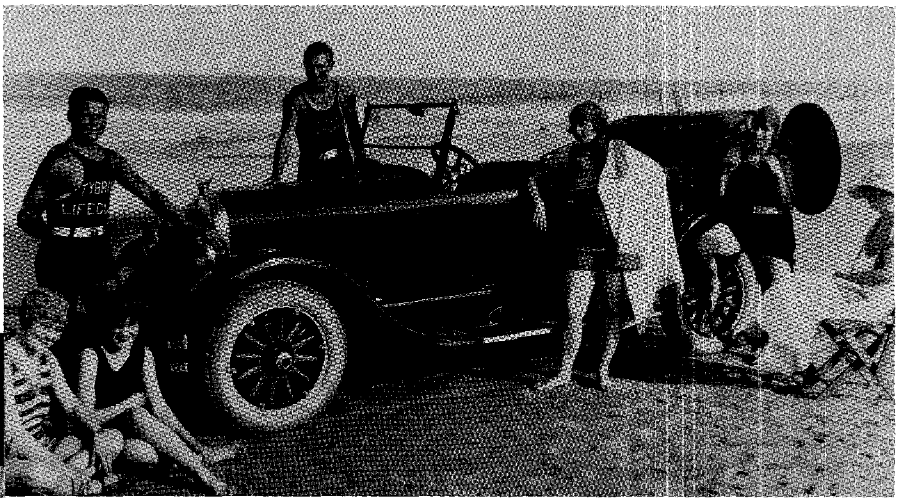


Image: Hanes Hosiery Inc., 1954

IMPRESSIONS IN
PRINT
70 YEARS OF HISTORY

A decade by decade retrospective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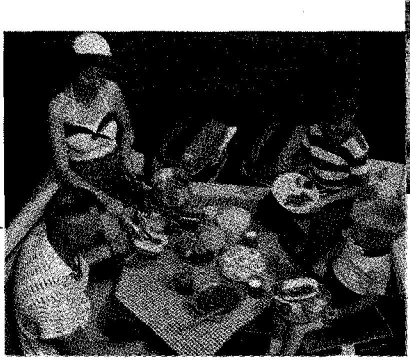
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Where do we look to find history? When the century is over, what impressions will remain? By examining trends in politics, economics, or science, we come to know the more tangible aspects of an era. But it is through advertising that we can perhaps most readily gain insight into the ethos of the American people.

Beyond their trade in memorabilia, many historical advertisements trace the evolution of our popular culture. The language, artistry, and images in these ads reflect a moment in time and play a significant role in defining the decades. The following pages present a decade by decade retrospective of seventy years in American history, complete with archival print ads that document our lives and times.

I will share
Emergency Unemployment Relief Committee
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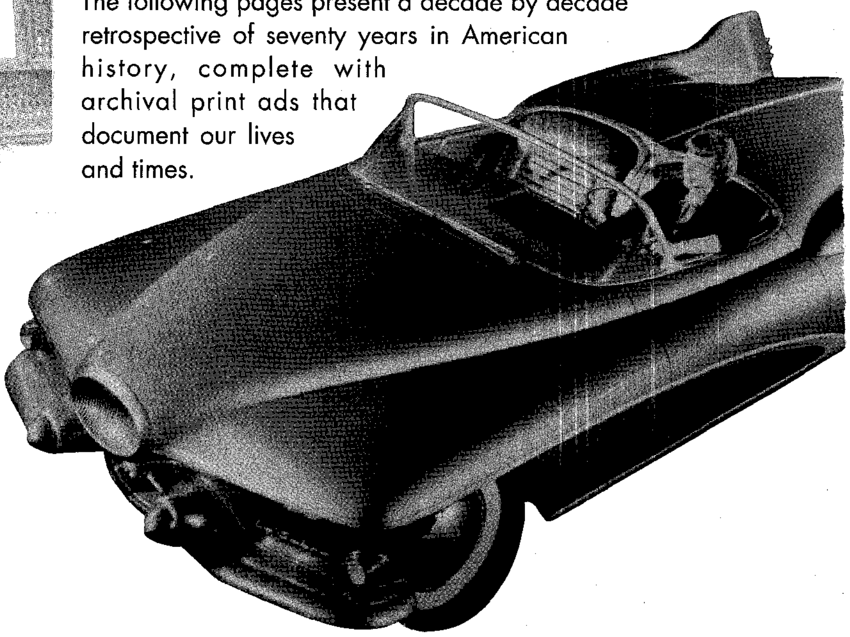
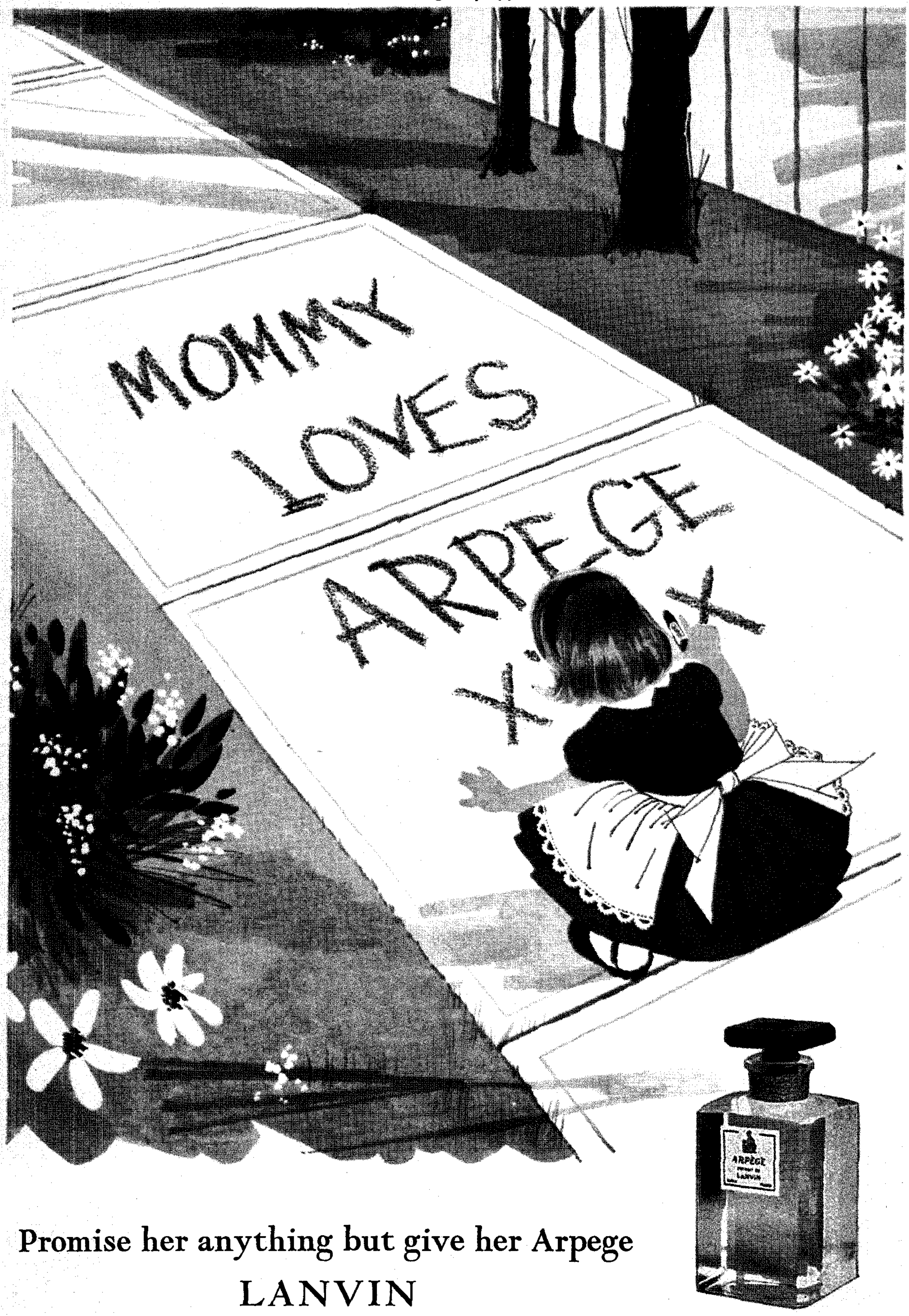
As advances in technology shaped the way we lived, advertising images entered the cultural vernacular, symbolizing not only personal desires, but social concerns.




MOMMY
LOVES
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LANVIN

Promise her anything but give her Arpege

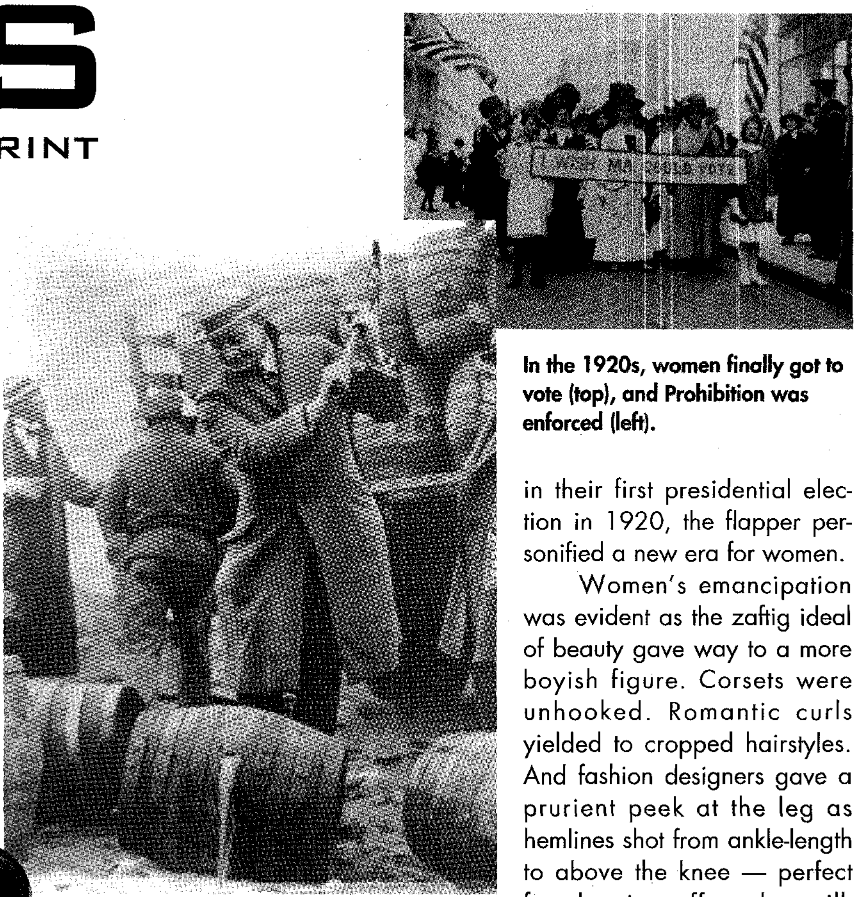
LANVIN

THE '20s

IMPRESSIONS IN PRINT

At the close of World War I, a new world order took hold, with the United States firmly ensconced as a leading power. Trade and industry expanded, stock markets boomed, jazz blared, and bathtubs overflowed with Prohibition's bootleg gin. The Roaring Twenties, or the Jazz Age, witnessed continued urbanization, the emergence of America's first youth culture, newfound freedoms for women, and unprecedented technological advances.

It was the decade that roared.



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In the 1920s, women finally got to vote (top), and Prohibition was enforced (left).

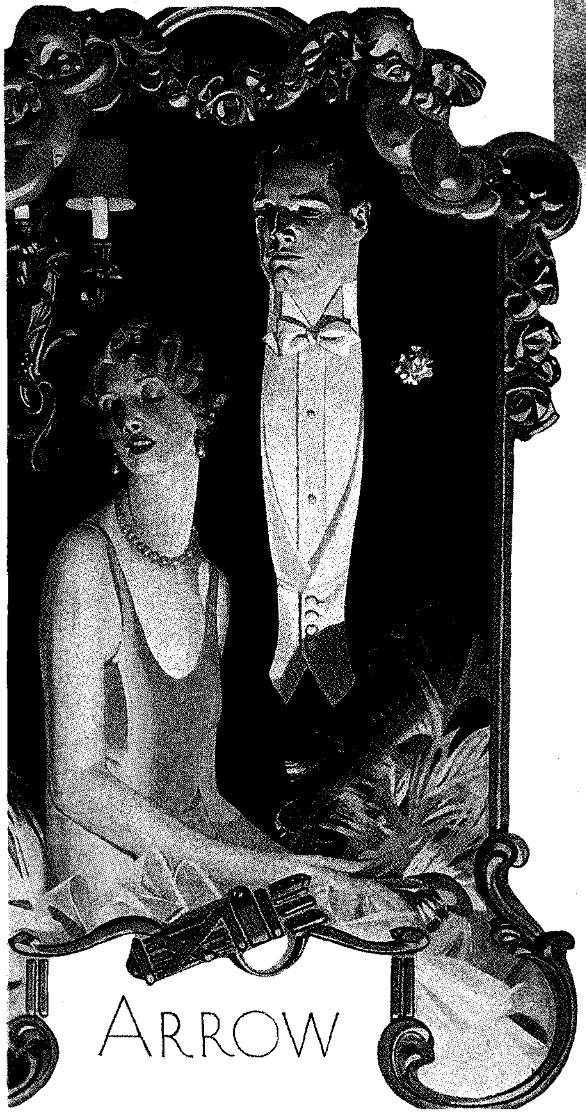
Consumers not only had more time on their hands, they also had more money to spend. Advertisers were quick to introduce — and create a demand for — the new technology. Marketers, having determined that ads were read and products were purchased by women, targeted women and sought to perpetuate the image of the flapper — an exuberant icon of 1920s advertising.

The flapper, with her outré behavior and shocking hemlines, symbolized far more than the nation's youthquake. With the passage of the 19th Amendment, granting women the right to vote in their first presidential election in 1920, the flapper personified a new era for women.

Women's emancipation was evident as the zaftig ideal of beauty gave way to a more boyish figure. Corsets were unhooked. Romantic curls yielded to cropped hairstyles. And fashion designers gave a prurient peek at the leg as hemlines shot from ankle-length to above the knee — perfect for showing off modern silk stockings, formerly available solely among the privileged classes.

Electrification brought the benefits of technology to the home and a new consumer culture was born. Convenience and efficiency were valued in everything from appliances to household products to foods, and thus became key selling points. Ads promoted the concept of a society of leisure — one in which science enabled the consumer to exert control over her life and enjoy more time with her family.

The automobile, one of the most coveted possessions of 1920s life, brought about vast changes in the U.S., including the development of a national highway system, roadside restaurants and motels, and the naissance of outdoor advertising and gas stations. Offering consumers mobility, freedom and prestige, nearly 23 million cars were owned by Americans in 1929.



In highly artistic illustrations, print ads of the 1920s beautifully reflected the refined ideal of prosperity and glamour.

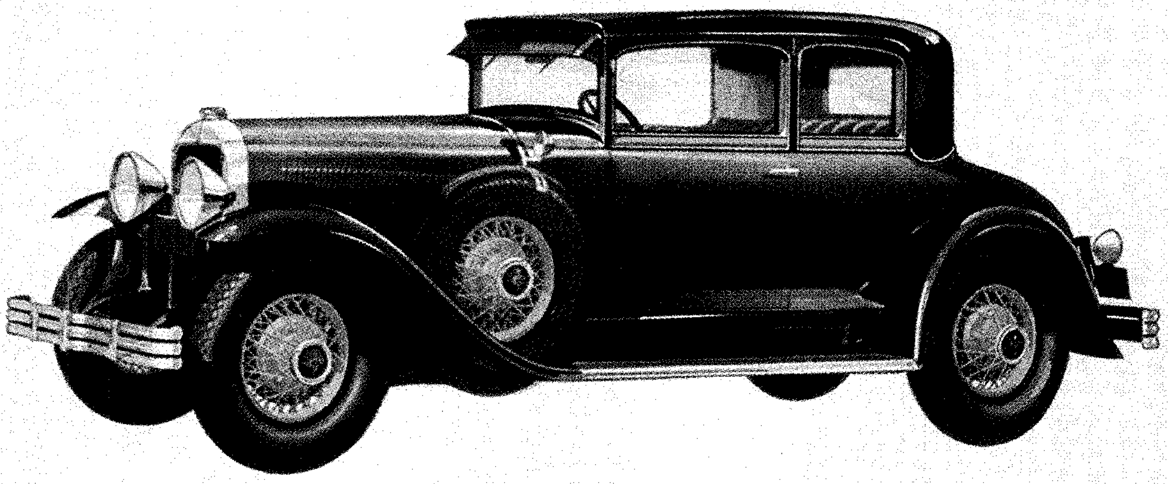
By permission of The Arrow Company, a division of Cluett Peabody & Co. Inc.

Advertisement originally appeared in 1929

"Pay as much as you will—no car will pay you more—nor serve you better nor longer than a Buick!"

Dollars are for delight. To spend them grudgingly, or prodigally, is to defeat their purpose. To invest them in a Buick is to purchase maximum motoring delight—the topmost degree of style, beauty, comfort, performance—without paying a single dollar premium ❖ ❖ ❖ That is what makes Buick the standard of motor car value. That is what makes it the outstanding choice of discerning men and women everywhere.

BUICK MOTOR COMPANY
NEW YORK BRANCHES: Broadway at 55th St., Broadway at 230th St.
BROOKLYN BRANCHES: Flatbush at 8th Ave., Atlantic at Grand Ave. NEWARK BRANCH: 497 Broad St.



BUICK

WHEN BETTER AUTOMOBILES ARE BUILT . . . BUICK WILL BUILD THEM

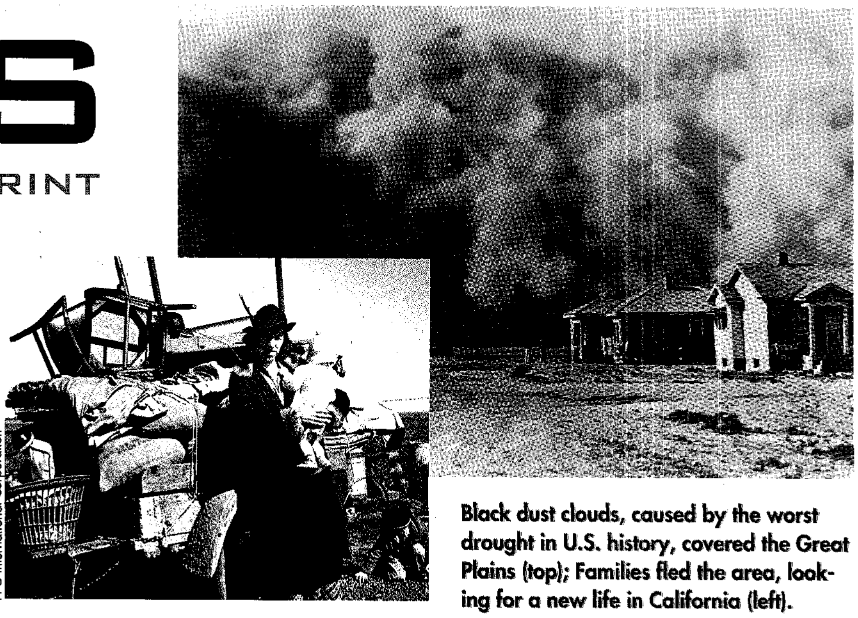
THE '30s

IMPRESSIONS IN PRINT

On Black Thursday, October 24, 1929, the stock market crashed, sending tremors from Wall Street to the West Coast. Not long after, the country's woes were compounded by an ecological disaster, as the Great Plains suffered the worst drought in U.S. history. While unemployment rates reached twenty-five percent, "fireside chat" Franklin D. Roosevelt — the nation's only four-term President — promised hope with his New Deal pledges.

National advertising dropped nearly seventy percent during the Depression. Color and illustration, being too costly, nearly disappeared. Heavy text in a multitude of typefaces clamored for attention. Ads featured anxious faces that reflected — and capitalized on — consumers' intensified malaise.

However, consumers' concern for careful spending grew into an organized revolt that questioned product claims and brought the advertising industry under government scrutiny. The Food, Drug, and Cosmetics Act of 1938 monitored false or misleading advertising claims, ushering in a new age of consumer advocacy.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Black dust clouds, caused by the worst drought in U.S. history, covered the Great Plains (top); Families fled the area, looking for a new life in California (left).

THE '40s

While the troubles here at home had kept the American public focused on its own country, dictators abroad were reshuffling the geopolitical deck. Resistance to U.S. involvement in the war was widespread but the December 7, 1941 Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor forced the U.S. out of isolationism and irrevocably into World War II.

The mass mobilization of war shifted the country's economic basis. New jobs in factories and production lines were filled by women. Prior to the war, women had constituted about one quarter of the workforce, with twelve million women working outside the home. Three years later, that number had reached sixteen million. The War Advertising Council encouraged women to take over positions formerly held by men with slogans such as "We Can Do It" and "Do The Job He Left Behind."

Companies found that patriotic positioning fostered consumer loyalty and sold goods. Individual needs were sacrificed for the good of the greater whole. The women's fashion statement of the time, the tailored look, was the result of war-time shortages of textiles. And while the country rationed coffee, sugar, and gas, the War Advertising Council rallied support for the armed forces and concern for national security with messages such as "Loose Lips Sink Ships."

During World War II, women entered the work force in unprecedented numbers.

Illustration circa 1955

veni, vidi, vici.

Brioni
ROMA

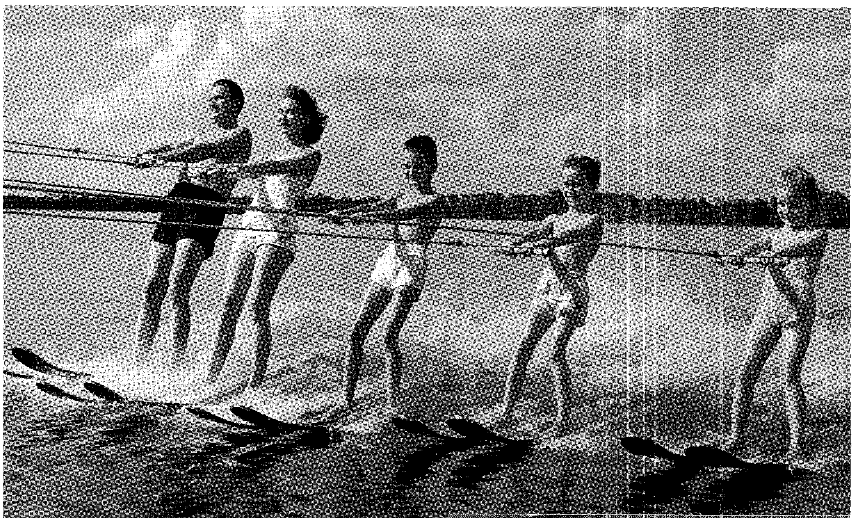
THE ART OF HAND-TAILORED ELEGANCE

THE '50s

IMPRESSIONS IN PRINT

Post-war prosperity, sprawling suburbs, TV sitcoms, and Elvis's history-making hips form an idyllic portrait of the fifties. However, underlying this serene surface simmered a hotbed of emerging political issues — the beginnings of the Civil Rights movement, the threat of nuclear attack, and the fear of Communism — shading an otherwise sunny, laugh-track-filled decade with seriousness.

After the U.S. emerged from World War II, increased employment and a longer work week at higher wages resulted in a new consumer culture with greater disposable incomes. The middle class augmented its ranks with an exploding birth rate, settling into prefabricated houses on the outskirts of big cities; suburbia was born. With heightened production and consumption, Madison Avenue obliged the public's craving for material goods and its strong desire to forget the war and the Depression. Ads associated material goods with "the good life," the American ideal, and print advertising provided an equally brilliant counterpart to television, now in its "Golden Age."



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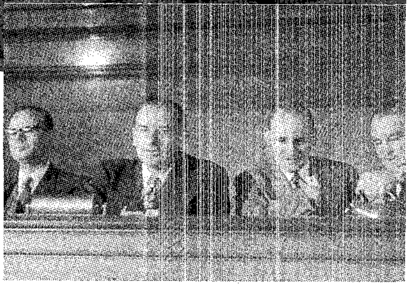
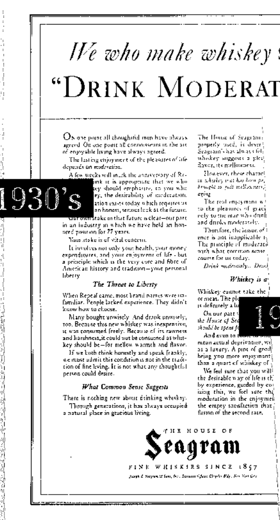


FPG International Corporation

Serious issues shaded an otherwise sunny decade.

The fifties were a time typified by upbeat glamour and family fun, but they were also a decade of deep suspicions as personified by Joseph McCarthy.

With war hero General Dwight D. Eisenhower taking over President Truman's White House after the 1952 election, thereby ending twenty years of democratic rule, and with the Supreme Court's ruling to end segregation in public schools in 1954, the country had indeed entered a new age. But the ideologically charged Cold War era was fraught with fear



1930's

We who make whiskey SAY:

"DRINK MODERATELY"

On one point all thoughtful men have always agreed. On one point all connoisseurs in the art of enjoyable living have always agreed.

The lasting enjoyment of the pleasures of life depends on *moderation*.

Your stake is of vital concern.

It involves not only your health, your money expenditures, and your enjoyment of life - but a principle which is the very core and fibre of American history and tradition—your personal liberty.

The Threat to Liberty

When Repeal came, most brand names were unfamiliar. People lacked experience. They didn't know how to choose.

Many bought unwisely. And drank unwisely, too. Because this new whiskey was inexpensive, it was consumed freely. Because of its rawness and harshness, it could not be consumed as whiskey should be—for mellow warmth and flavor.

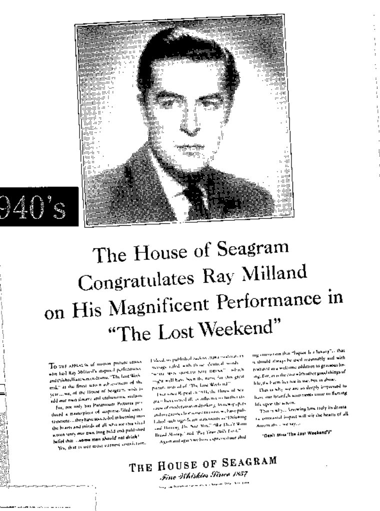
If we both think honestly and speak frankly, we must admit this condition is not in the tradition of fine living. It is not what any thoughtful person could desire.

What Common Sense Suggests

There is nothing new about drinking whiskey.

Through generations, it has always occupied a natural place in gracious living.

THE HOUSE OF
Seagram
FINE WHISKIES SINCE 1857

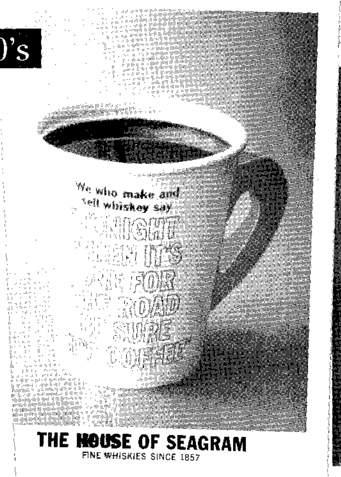


1940's

The House of Seagram Congratulates Ray Milland on His Magnificent Performance in "The Lost Weekend"

"Don't Miss 'The Lost Weekend'!"

THE HOUSE OF SEAGRAM
Fine Whiskies Since 1857



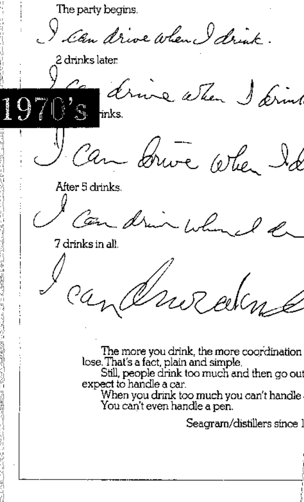
1950's

THE HOUSE OF SEAGRAM
FINE WHISKIES SINCE 1857

1960's

"But, Daddy, if I don't drink they'll think I'm nowhere."

Now, Dad, what do you say to that?



1970's

The party begins.

I can drive when I drink.

2 drinks later.

I can drive when I drink

inks.

I can drive when I dr

After 5 drinks.

I can drive when I d

7 drinks in all.

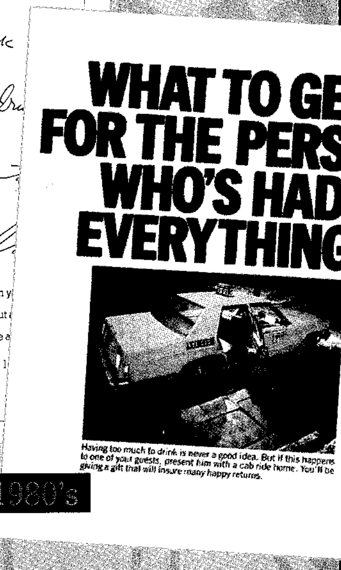
I can drive when

The more you drink, the more coordination y lose. That's a fact, plain and simple.

Still, people drink too much and then go out expect to handle a car.

When you drink too much you can't handle a You can't even handle a pen.

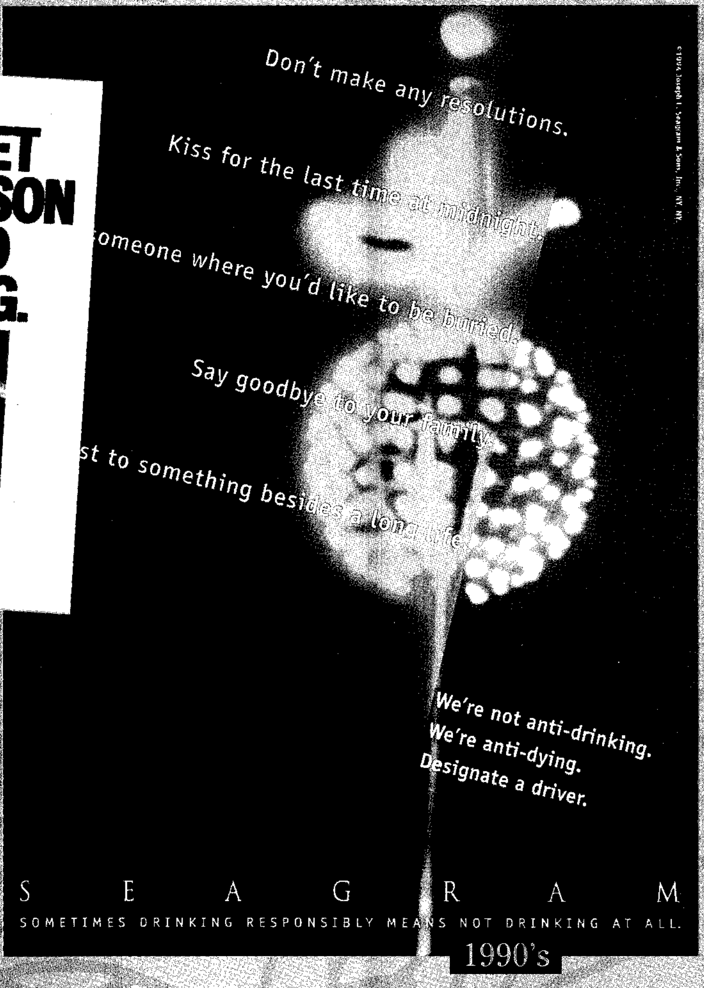
Seagram/distillers since 1



WHAT TO GET FOR THE PERSON WHO'S HAD EVERYTHING.

Having too much to drink is never a good idea. But if this happens to one of your guests, present him with a cab ride home. You'll be giving a gift that will insure many happy returns.

1980's



Don't make any resolutions.
Kiss for the last time at midnight.
omeone where you'd like to be buried.
Say goodbye to your family.
st to something besides a long life.

We're not anti-drinking.
We're anti-dying.
Designate a driver.

SEAGRAM

SOMETIMES DRINKING RESPONSIBLY MEANS NOT DRINKING AT ALL.

©1994 Joseph E. Seagram & Sons, Inc., NY, NY.

1990's

Responsible Drinking

Since the early 1930s, Seagram has extended its commitment beyond producing top quality products to actively advocating the responsible consumption of our products. Through a ground-breaking series of print advertisements, Seagram became a pioneer in public service, facing the problem of reckless drinking head on at a time when the subject of alcohol abuse was taboo. Even as they have evolved with time, all of these milestone ads still reflect a hope that beverage alcohol be enjoyed wisely, responsibly, and in celebration of happiness.

JOSEPH E. SEAGRAM & SONS, INC.
Those who appreciate quality enjoy it responsibly.

ADVERTISEMENT

THE '50s

IMPRESSIONS IN PRINT

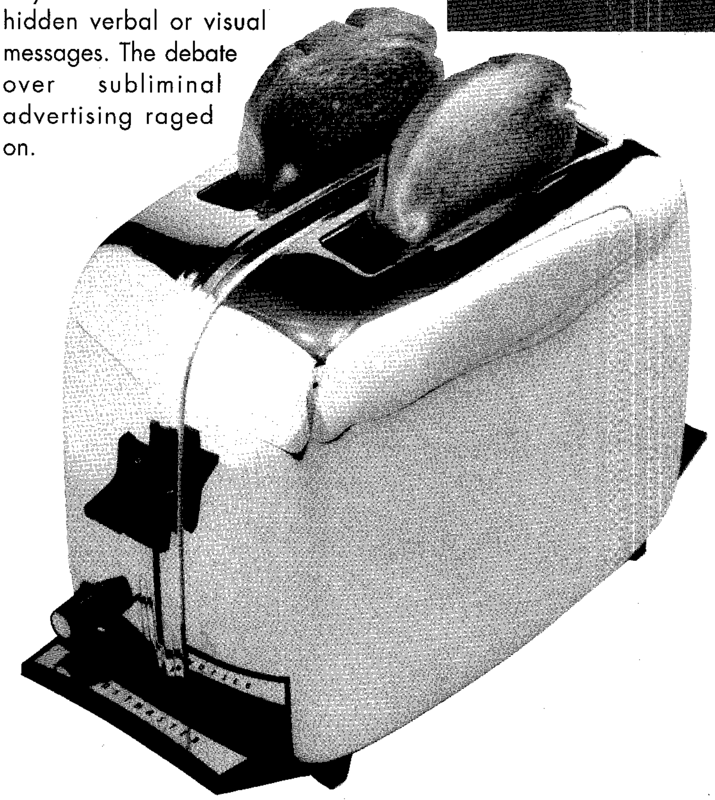
FPG International Corporation

The suburbs, with their prefabricated houses, expanded throughout the 1950s.

Elvis Presley, RCA's sensational new star, became an overnight legend.

and paranoia. The development of the hydrogen bomb by the U.S. and the Soviet Union, its sworn adversary, and a senator named Joseph R. McCarthy brought that paranoia to a head. Americans seized upon the politician's claims that members of the Communist Party were known to be influencing State Department policies. In 1954, before the eyes of twenty million Americans, McCarthyism reached its pinnacle, as the Army-McCarthy hearings aired on national television.

Suspicion and public mistrust of advertising reached new heights in the fifties as well. While advertisers stepped up market research and segmentation, minorities struggled against stereotypes. Consumers voiced concerns over manipulative advertising techniques, and charged that advertisers were appealing to the buyer's subconscious with hidden verbal or visual messages. The debate over subliminal advertising raged on.

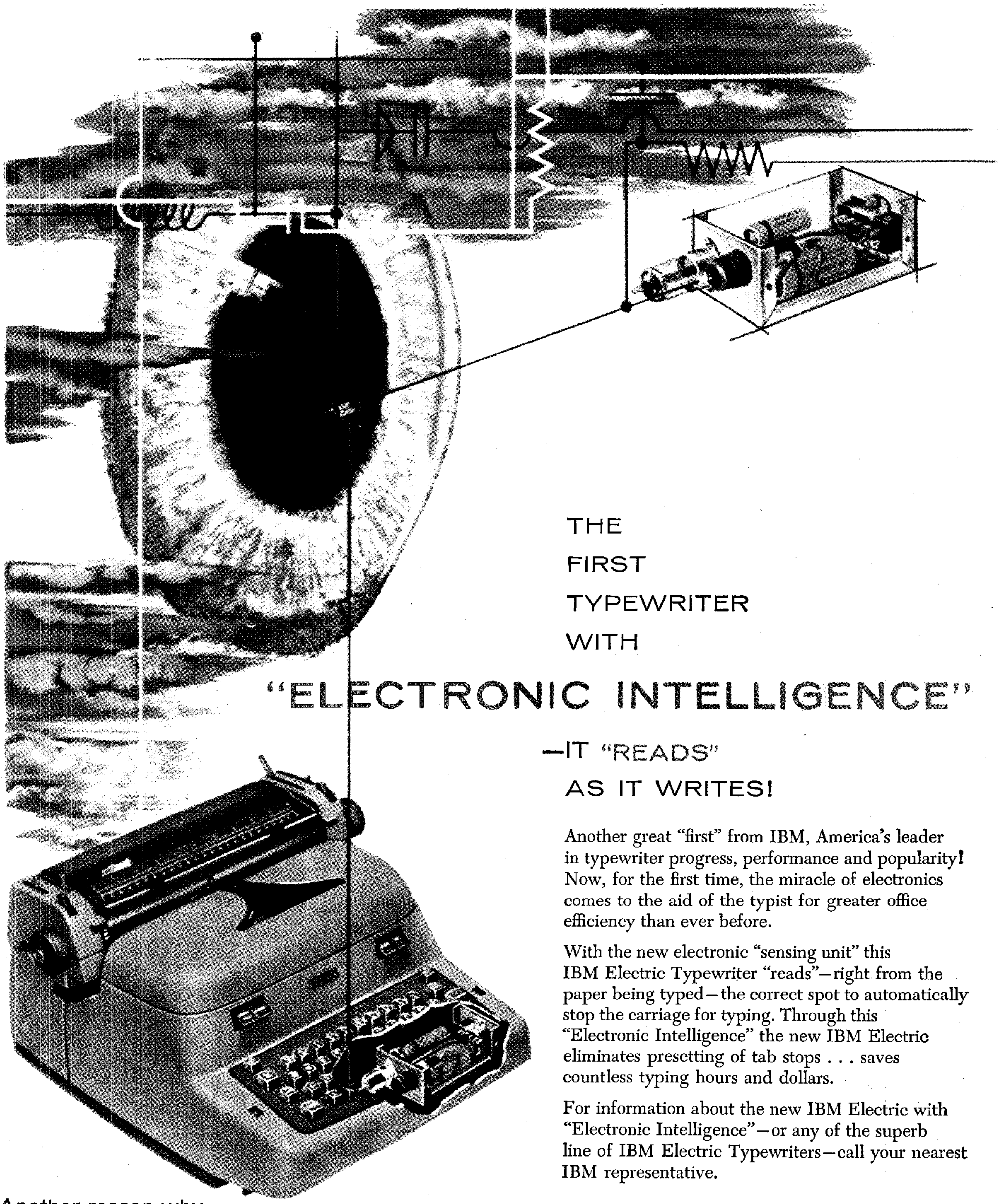


ELVIS & ED

In 1956, a poor boy from Tennessee with a soulful voice, black ducktail hair, and gyrating hips caused a national uproar. Elvis Presley, RCA's sensational new star, became an overnight legend with his appearances on "The Ed Sullivan Show."

Sullivan redressed an earlier statement that Presley was offensive to a family audience and invited the singer on his show for three appearances — the third of which was shown only from the waist up. In a music (and later, film) career that spanned nearly twenty years, Presley reigned as the undisputed King of Rock & Roll until his untimely death of a drug overdose in August 1977. Presley inspired an entire generation and his star shines almost as brightly as it did during his career, with a cult following that refuses to accept his death and still cites frequent "Elvis sightings" throughout the country.

Now IBM applies the Miracle of Electronics to the Electric Typewriter—



THE
FIRST
TYPEWRITER
WITH
"ELECTRONIC INTELLIGENCE"

—IT "READS" AS IT WRITES!

Another great "first" from IBM, America's leader in typewriter progress, performance and popularity! Now, for the first time, the miracle of electronics comes to the aid of the typist for greater office efficiency than ever before.

With the new electronic "sensing unit" this IBM Electric Typewriter "reads"—right from the paper being typed—the correct spot to automatically stop the carriage for typing. Through this "Electronic Intelligence" the new IBM Electric eliminates presetting of tab stops . . . saves countless typing hours and dollars.

For information about the new IBM Electric with "Electronic Intelligence"—or any of the superb line of IBM Electric Typewriters—call your nearest IBM representative.

Another reason why . . .

IBM **ELECTRIC TYPEWRITERS** outsell all other electrics combined!

ELECTRIC TYPEWRITERS • DATA PROCESSING • TIME EQUIPMENT • MILITARY PRODUCTS

Advertisement originally appeared in 1956

THE '60s

IMPRESSIONS IN PRINT

The psychedelic backdrop of the '60s, a decade punctuated by idealism, social change, technological breakthroughs, and violence, provided fertile ground for advertising's creative revolution.

As President Kennedy sent troops into Vietnam in a futile war to halt the advances of North Vietnam's Ho Chi Minh and to stop the spread of Communism, the counter-culture emerged, challenging the "Establishment" and overturning conventional hierarchies of authority. Hippies, a generation of disaffected youth, tripped on LSD, a psychedelic drug promoted by Harvard psychologist Timothy Leary, and embraced peace, "flower power," Woodstock, and sexual experimentation, providing some of the decade's most enduring images.

> *The youthful counter-culture rose up to challenge the older "Establishment."*

Although advertisers recognized the importance of, and began addressing, the African-American market, the war for equality was far from over on the home front. Racial tensions rocked the nation, and pressure mounted in continued efforts toward desegregation, even after the 1964 passage of the Civil Rights Act under President Johnson.

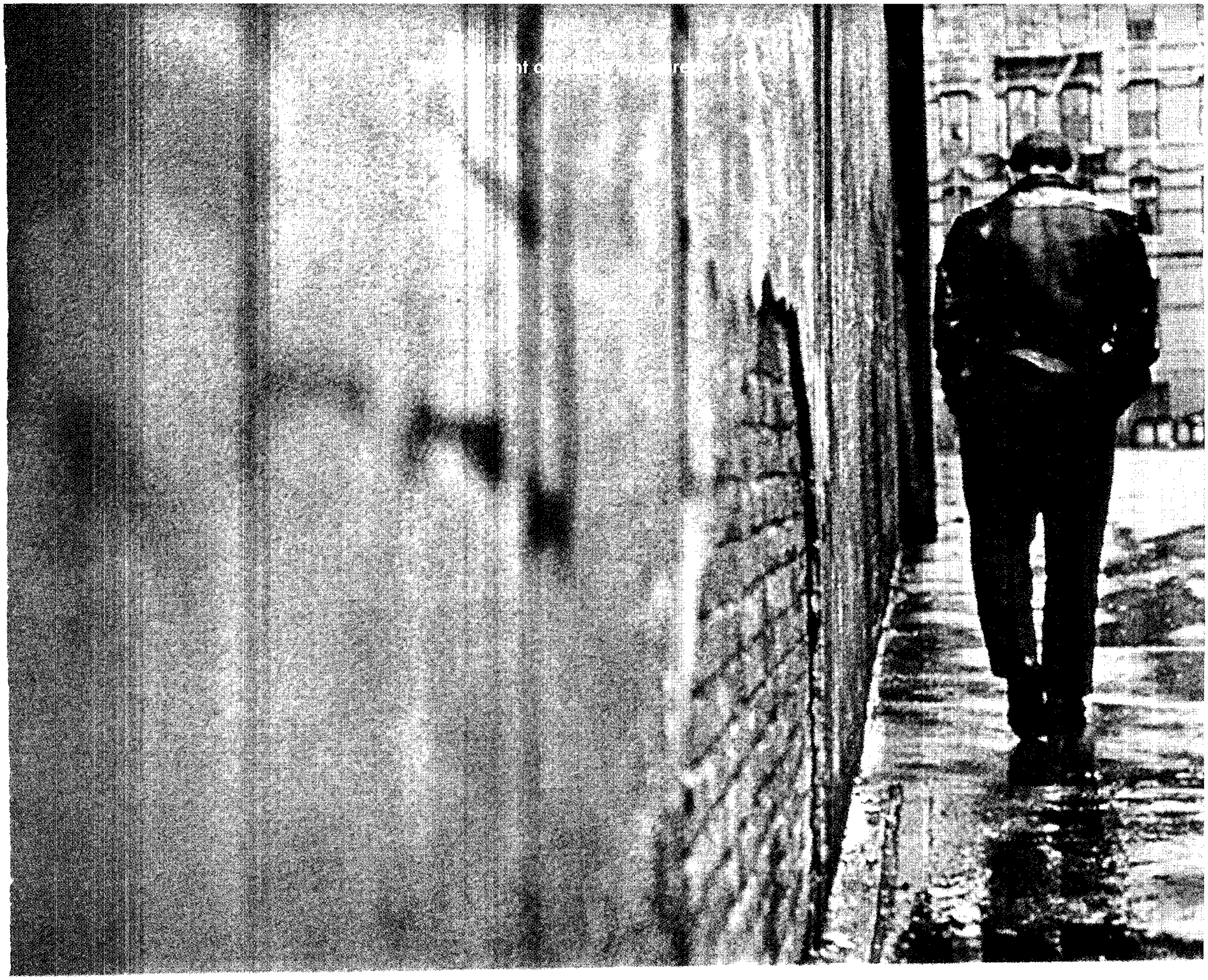
Women, too, took on the system, challenging conventional stereotypes and decrying advertising's portrayal of women as mindless housewives and sex objects. Betty Friedan, founder of the National Organization for Women (NOW) gave impetus to the women's movement with the 1963 best-seller "The Feminine Mystique."

If it is said that adversity builds character, then it must be said that the social strife of the sixties was fodder for the imagination. The arts flourished and Pop Art — inspired by objects in mass culture — dominated the scene. Avant-garde artists such as Andy Warhol, the man who glorified soup cans, and comic-strip artist Roy Lichtenstein not only changed the art

FPG International Corporation

President Kennedy, who was assassinated in 1963, sent the first U.S. troops to Vietnam. The war lasted into the next decade; memories of Kennedy — and the war — still linger.

FPG International Corporation



I AM SCHOOL DROPOUT. I CANT READ GOOD.
I CANT GET A JOB. HELP ME PLEASE

HE'S seventeen. Scared. Broke. No job. No hope.

Why did he quit school? His biggest problem was reading. The average school dropout is *at least* two years behind in reading when he quits.

Reading problems are the main reason *a million kids a year* quit school.

Reading problems are the main reason one third of *this year's* freshmen will leave high school before they graduate. It happens in rural areas and in cities alike.

What can *you* do to help? Many communities now have programs to help backward readers. A few years ago, 20 volunteers in New York started such a program. Last year, this group had grown big enough to help over 20,000 children with reading difficulties.

Find out if there's a group working where you live. If not, talk to your high school principal and *start* a program.

It's a selfish cause. The future of your country is at stake.

FOR FREE REPRINTS of this advertisement, write: Box 444C, International Paper, 220 East 42nd St., New York, N.Y. 10017.

"Send me a man who reads!"

A series by International Paper

International Paper makes more paper products than any company in the world. Everything from frozen-food cartons to printing papers.

I-P believes the most important thing that's ever done with paper is *putting words on it.*

This advertising series is International Paper's contribution to the cause of *reading.*

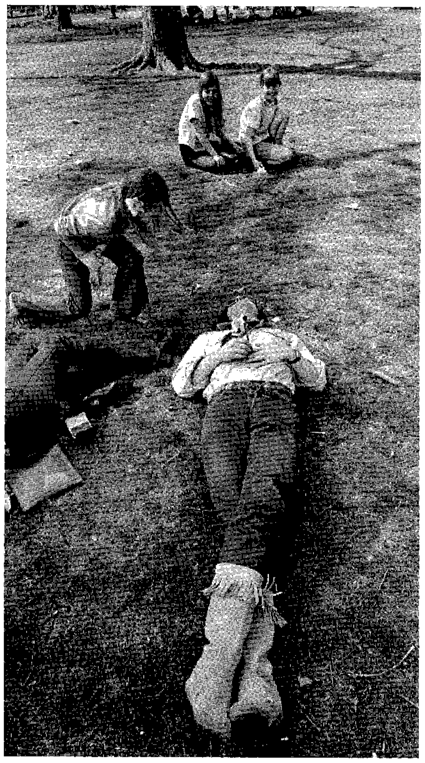
©International Paper Company 1965

Ⓐ and "Send me a man who reads!" are marks of International Paper Company.

INTERNATIONAL PAPER

THE '60s

IMPRESSIONS IN PRINT



FPG International Corporation

During the '60s, the young embraced peace, harmony, and creative freedom.

The social strife of the '60s was fodder for the imagination.

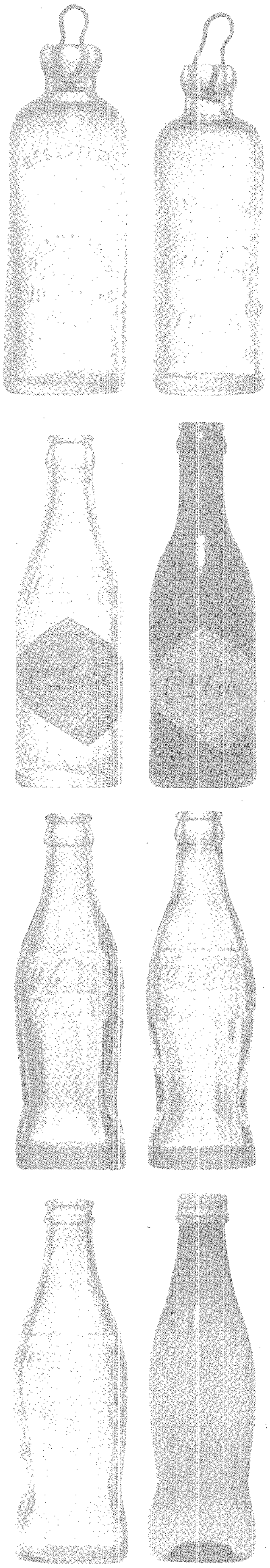
world but also influenced the look of advertising. Advertising in the '60s was marked by a return of color and variety, a reliance on shock value and humor, greater freedom, and an anti-establishment slant. Creative teams partnered copywriter with art director, and the boutique agency, a small, highly creative shop, was formed. Ad campaigns developed in the sixties are still considered among the best today.

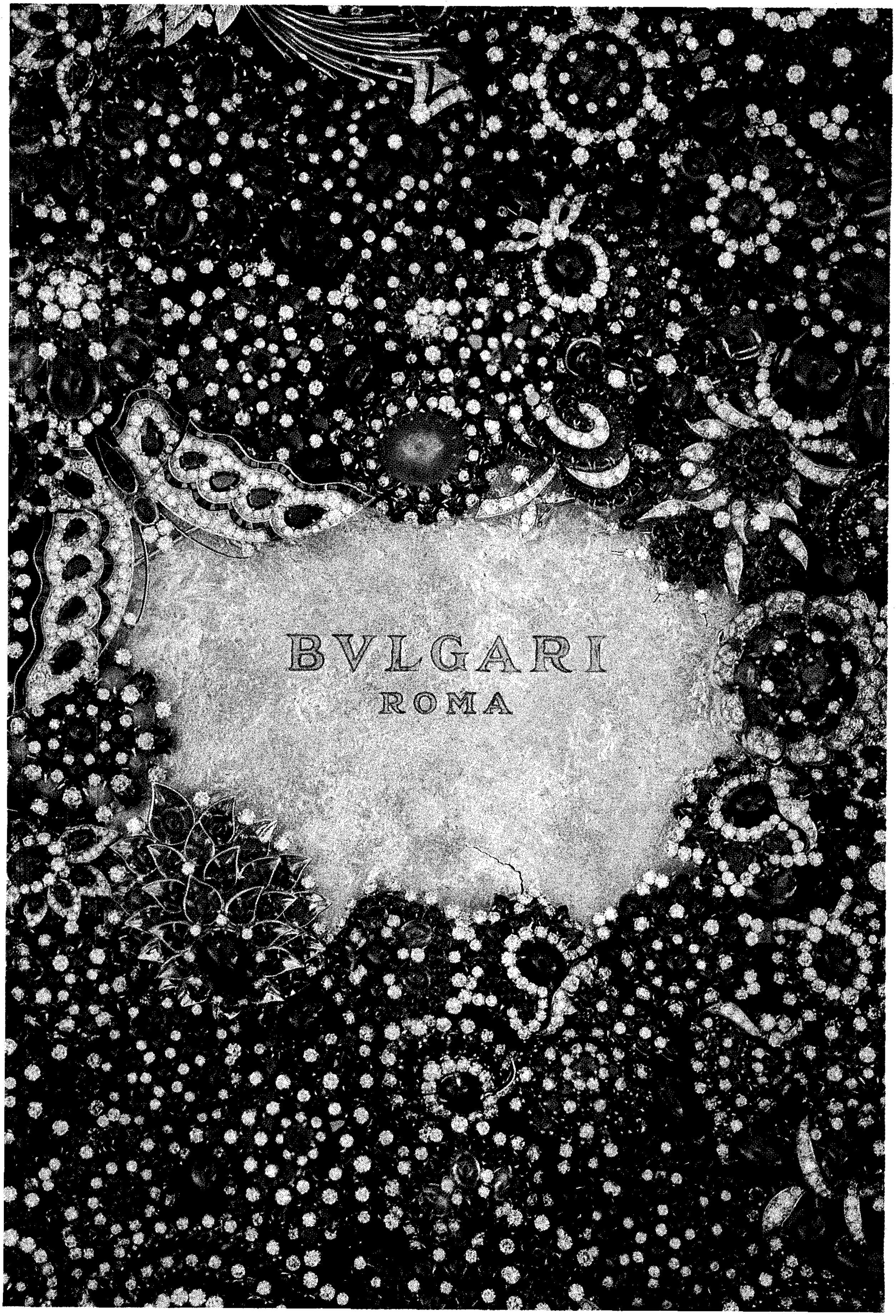
THE FORCES BEHIND THE CREATIVE REVOLUTION

It is impossible to gain a perspective on the history of print advertising in America without considering the two men who are credited with having revolutionized the industry. David Ogilvy and Bill Bernbach, creative geniuses whose approaches were seemingly at odds with one another, offered the world a new way of viewing product sales.

In the face of the era's emphasis on marketing segmentation and research, both Ogilvy and Bernbach eschewed the numbers game in favor of the art of persuasion. Both focused on capturing consumer attention and selling the product. And contrary to the widespread elitism in the ad community, both respected the reader's intelligence.

However, the two men differed when it came to humor and the use of color. Whereas Ogilvy ads featured colored photographs and heavy copy with intelligent, detailed explanations of how the product worked, Bernbach ads were usually dramatic black and white layouts, limited to one selling point with a distinct sense of humor. Differences aside, both men developed campaigns that are still held up as models of advertising at its best.




BVLGARI
ROMA

Advertising poster showing brooches with precious stones (about 1965)

THE '70s

IMPRESSIONS IN PRINT

ERA
YES
ON
#10
PRO-CHOICE
I VOTE

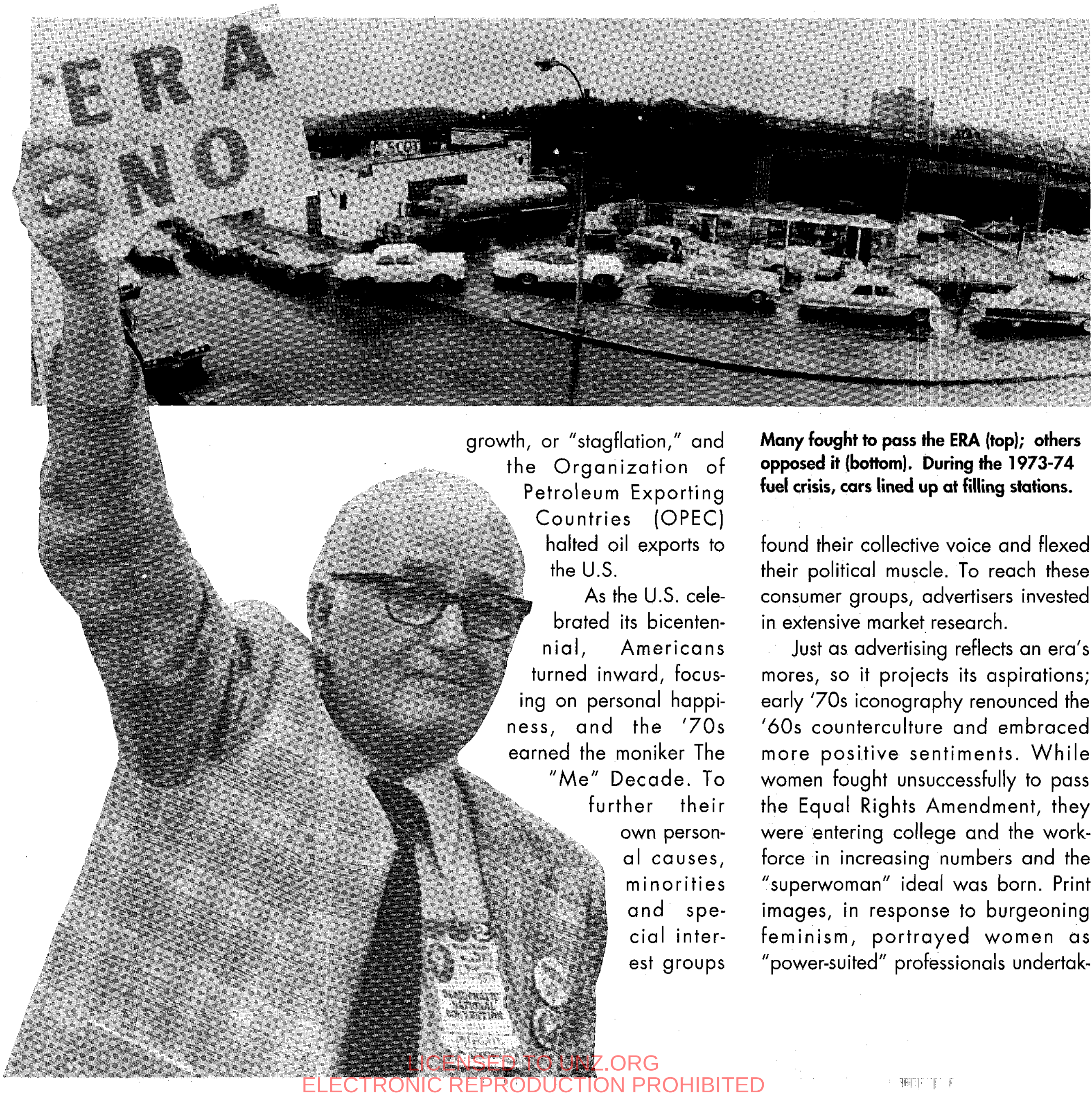
FPG International Corporation

The '70s earned the moniker The "Me" Decade.

During the 1970s, U.S. Presidents achieved great strides as statesmen, reshaping world politics. Yet they failed to maintain the confidence of the American populace as domestic affairs brought dissatisfaction and disillusionment. Not since the Depression had the country's economy experienced such a slump, with soaring inflation and stagnant growth, or "stagflation," and the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) halted oil exports to the U.S.

As the U.S. celebrated its bicentennial, Americans turned inward, focusing on personal happiness, and the '70s earned the moniker The "Me" Decade. To further their own personal causes, minorities and special interest groups found their collective voice and flexed their political muscle. To reach these consumer groups, advertisers invested in extensive market research.

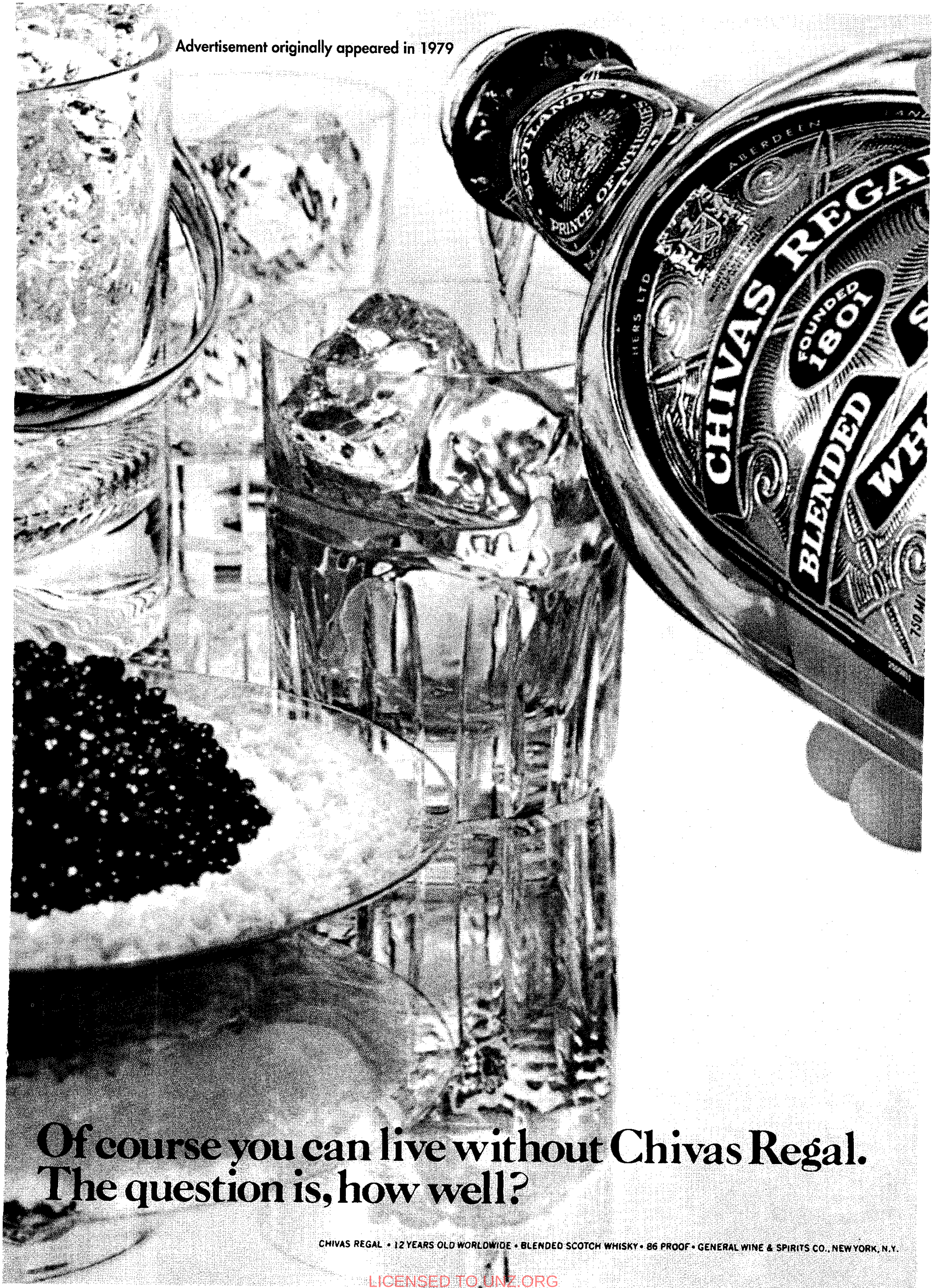
Just as advertising reflects an era's mores, so it projects its aspirations; early '70s iconography renounced the '60s counterculture and embraced more positive sentiments. While women fought unsuccessfully to pass the Equal Rights Amendment, they were entering college and the workforce in increasing numbers and the "superwoman" ideal was born. Print images, in response to burgeoning feminism, portrayed women as "power-suited" professionals undertak-



FPG International Corporation

Many fought to pass the ERA (top); others opposed it (bottom). During the 1973-74 fuel crisis, cars lined up at filling stations.

Advertisement originally appeared in 1979


SCOTLAND'S PRINCE OF WHISKIES
ABERDEEN
CHIVAS REGA
FOUNDED 1801
BLENDED
WH

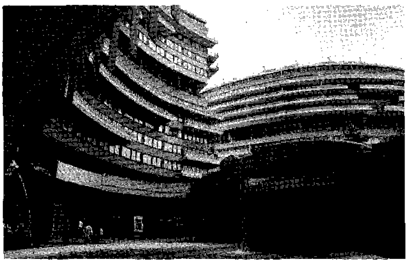
Of course you can live without Chivas Regal. The question is, how well?

CHIVAS REGAL • 12 YEARS OLD WORLDWIDE • BLENDED SCOTCH WHISKY • 86 PROOF • GENERAL WINE & SPIRITS CO., NEW YORK, N.Y.

THE '70s

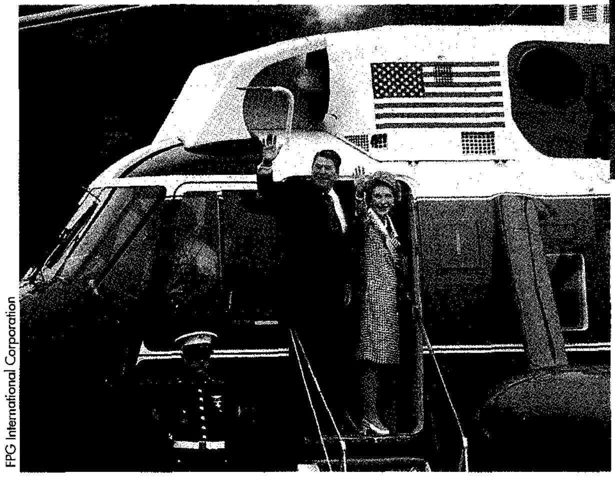
IMPRESSIONS IN PRINT

ing typically male-oriented activities. Advertisers clearly recognized women's growing economic power and targeted them, for the first time, as primary purchasers of big-ticket items such as cars, houses, securities, insurance, and financial services.

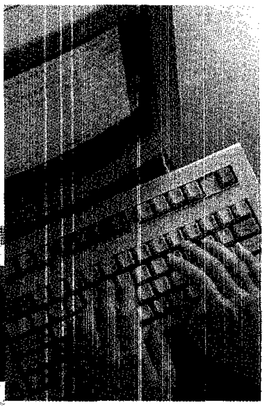


FPG International Corporation

The Watergate scandal brought down the Nixon administration.



FPG International Corporation



FPG International Corporation

Ronald Reagan and his wife Nancy occupied the White House for nearly all of the '80s (above). Computers became ubiquitous during this decade.

THE '80s

AND BEYOND

> *Models achieved celebrity status and the zeitgeist underscored an unwillingness to grow up — or old.*

The Great Communicator, Ronald Reagan, the actor-President, in office from 1981-1989, rode a high tide of optimism and economic growth. During this time, the country enjoyed the longest peacetime economic expansion in history.

In the eighties, advertising gained a stronger hold on post-modern culture. Models achieved celebrity status and the zeitgeist underscored an unwillingness to grow up — or old. The pursuit of physical perfection spawned a new age for the cosmetics and fitness industries and cosmetic surgery became de rigueur. Once more, in 1988, advertising attracted the watchful eye of the federal government when the Food and Drug Administration expressed concerns that the anti-aging claims exceeded guidelines for cosmetics and fell into the drug category.

In spite of continued reliance on research, hard-sell tactics gave way to a focus on the product's more esoteric aspects. With the introduction of the fragrance strip in 1984, print advertising reached into an interactive new dimension.

In the 1990s, the communication industry is exploding, and the latest travel destination has become cyberspace — via the Information Superhighway. Print ads are already used in tandem with CD ROM technology.

Although one can hardly envision where today's technology will lead, there is one certainty: advertising will record, monitor, reflect, re-create, and anticipate the social construct of America's collective consciousness.

Advertisement originally appeared in 196

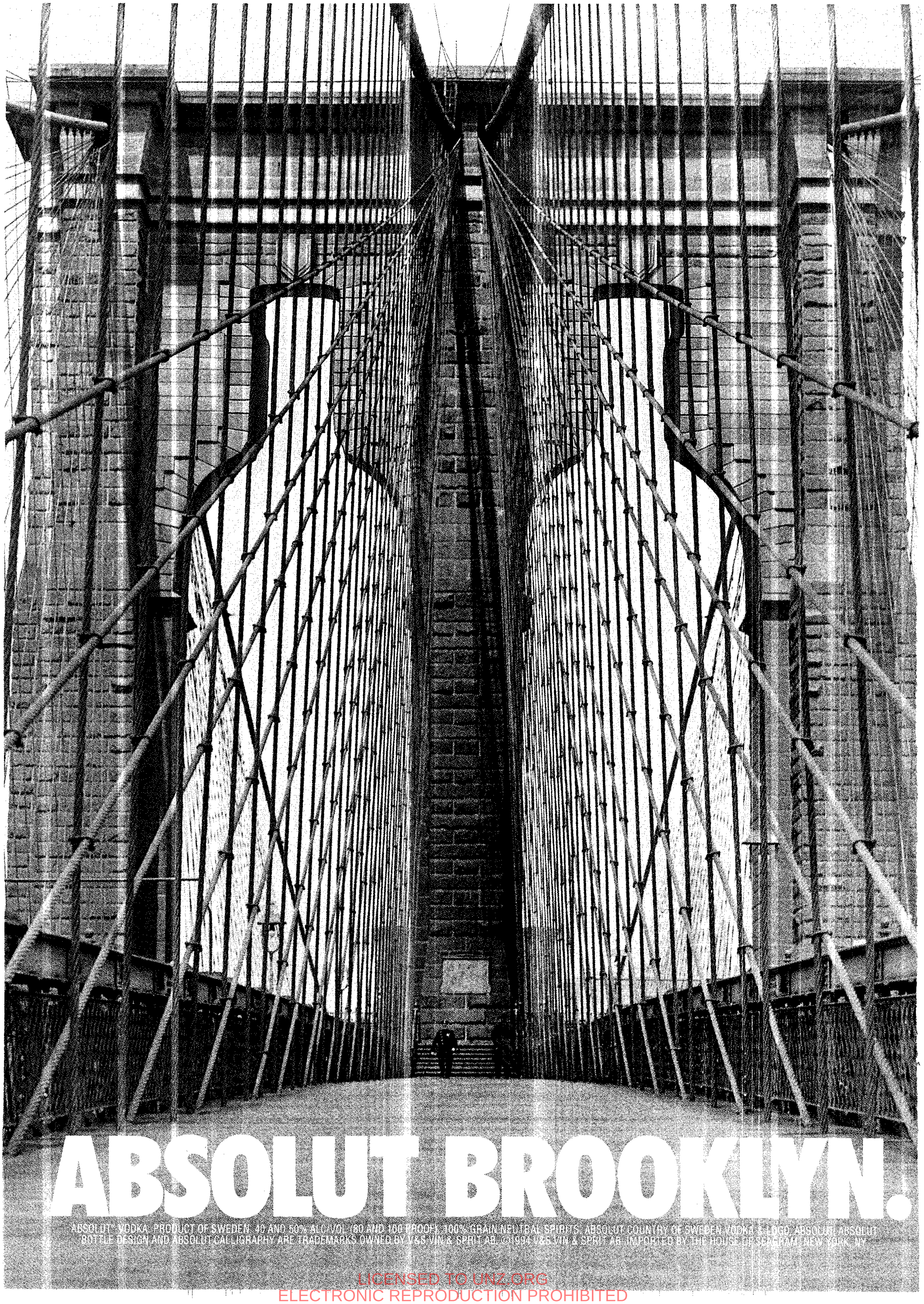
DBRG
CONNECTICUT

Packing for a picnic—photo by Mark Shav

Unshackle yourself. You have a friend at Chase Manhattan to help you care for your nest egg and act as your trustee. Delegate us at your convenience.

THE CHASE MANHATTAN BANK

Head Office: 1 Chase Manhattan Plaza, New York, New York 10015



ABSOLUT® VODKA. PRODUCT OF SWEDEN. 40 AND 50% ALC/VOL (80 AND 100 PROOF). 100% GRAIN NEUTRAL SPIRITS. ABSOLUT COUNTRY OF SWEDEN VODKA & LOGO, ABSOLUT, ABSOLUT BOTTLE DESIGN AND ABSOLUT CALLIGRAPHY ARE TRADEMARKS OWNED BY V&S VIN & SPRIT AB. ©1994 V&S VIN & SPRIT AB. IMPORTED BY THE HOUSE OF SEAGRAM, NEW YORK, NY.

PROFILE

SHOW DOG

It's not easy being a professional boxer. Biff Truesdale, who will be defending his titles at the Westminster show, just makes it look that way.

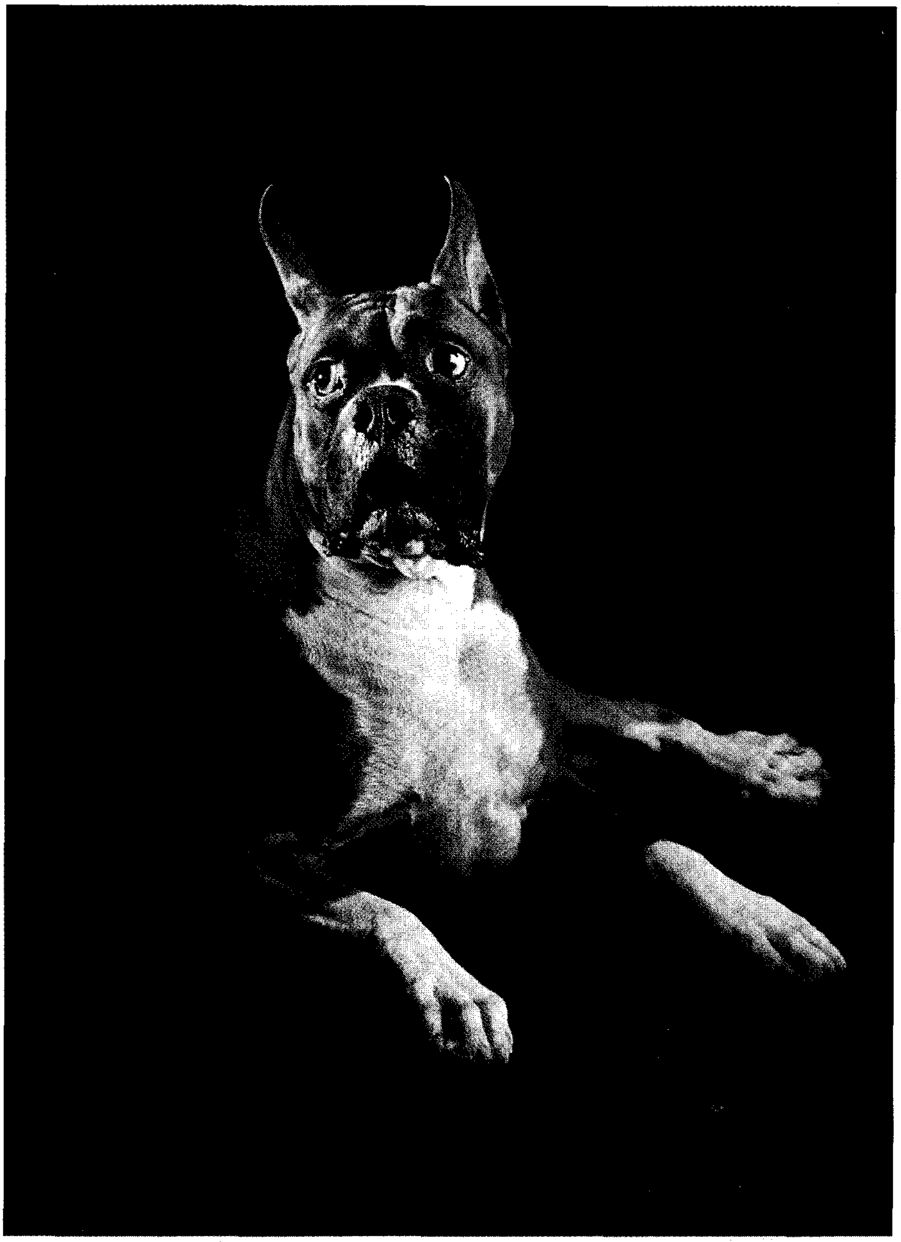
BY SUSAN ORLEAN

If I were a bitch, I'd be in love with Biff Truesdale. Biff is perfect. He's friendly, good-looking, rich, famous, and in excellent physical condition. He almost never drools. He's not afraid of commitment. He wants children—actually, he already has children and wants a lot more. He works hard and is a consummate professional, but he also knows how to have fun.

What Biff likes most is food and sex. This makes him sound boorish, which he is not—he's just elemental. Food he likes even better than sex. His favorite things to eat are cookies, mints, and hotel soap, but he will eat just about anything. Richard Krieger, a friend of Biff's who occasionally drives him to appointments, said not long ago, "When we're driving on I-95, we'll usually pull over at McDonald's. Even if Biff is napping, he always wakes up when we're getting close. I get him a few plain hamburgers with buns—no ketchup, no mustard, and no pickles. He loves hamburgers. I don't get him his own French fries, but if I get myself fries I always flip a few for him into the back."

If you're ever around Biff while you're eating something he wants to taste—cold roast beef, a Wheatables cracker, chocolate, pasta, aspirin, whatever—he will stare at you across the pleated bridge of his nose and let his eyes sag and his lips tremble and allow a little bead of drool to percolate at the edge of his mouth until you feel so crummy that you give him some. This routine puts the people who know him in a quandary, because Biff has to watch his weight. Usually, he is as skinny as Kate Moss, but he can put on three pounds in an instant. The holidays can be tough. He takes time off at Christmas and spends it at home, in Attleboro, Massachusetts, where there's a lot of food around and no pressure and no schedule and it's easy to eat all day. The extra weight goes to his neck. Luckily, Biff likes working out. He runs for fifteen or twenty minutes twice a day, either outside or on his Jog-Master. When he's feeling heavy, he runs longer, and skips snacks, until he's back down to his ideal weight of seventy-five pounds.

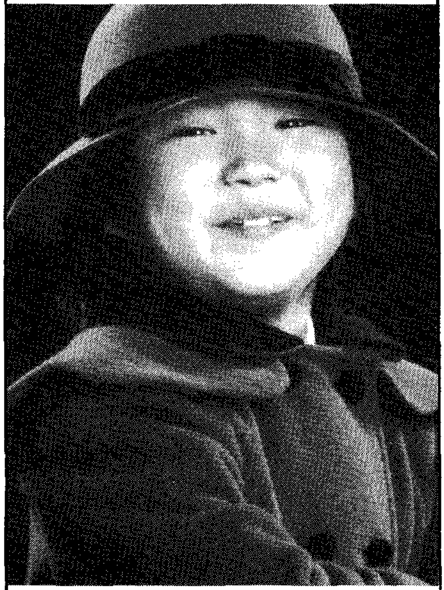
Biff is a boxer. He is a show dog—he performs under the name Champion Hi-Tech's Arbitrage—and so looking good is not mere vanity; it's business. A show dog's career is short, and judges are unforgiving. Each breed is judged by an explicit standard for appearance and temperament, and then there's the incalculable element of charisma in the ring. When a show dog is fat or lazy or sullen, he doesn't win; when he doesn't win, he doesn't enjoy the ancillary benefits of being a winner, like appearing as the celebrity spokesmodel on packages of Pedigree Mealtime with Lamb and Rice, which Biff will be doing soon, or picking the best-looking bitches and charging them six hundred



ELLIOTT ERWITT

Biff seems tough, William Truesdale says, "but there's a fragile ego inside there."

PHOTOGRAPHIC PORTRAITS THAT
CAPTURE THE SPIRIT OF YOUR CHILD BY



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FIRST TIME OFFERED!

THE WORLD'S MOST
PRECIOUS PERFUMES
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from
marilyn miglin
DESTINY...to balance your sensuality
with your spirituality.
PHEROMONE...created for the woman who
makes life an adventure. With love.
MAGIC...a new mystical, empowering scent.
M...for the man who thought he had everything.
FLUID GOLD (1 oz.)...a luxurious body
moisturizer to give your skin soft,
golden highlights.
BONUS GIFT: An elegant black satin evening bag.
$175.00 value. This first time only for $29.95.
To order, call
1-800-662-1120.

dollars or so for his sexual favors, which Biff does three or four times a month. Another ancillary benefit of being a winner is that almost every single weekend of the year, as he travels to shows around the country, he gets to hear people applaud for him and yell his name and tell him what a good boy he is, which is something he seems to enjoy at least as much as eating a bar of soap.

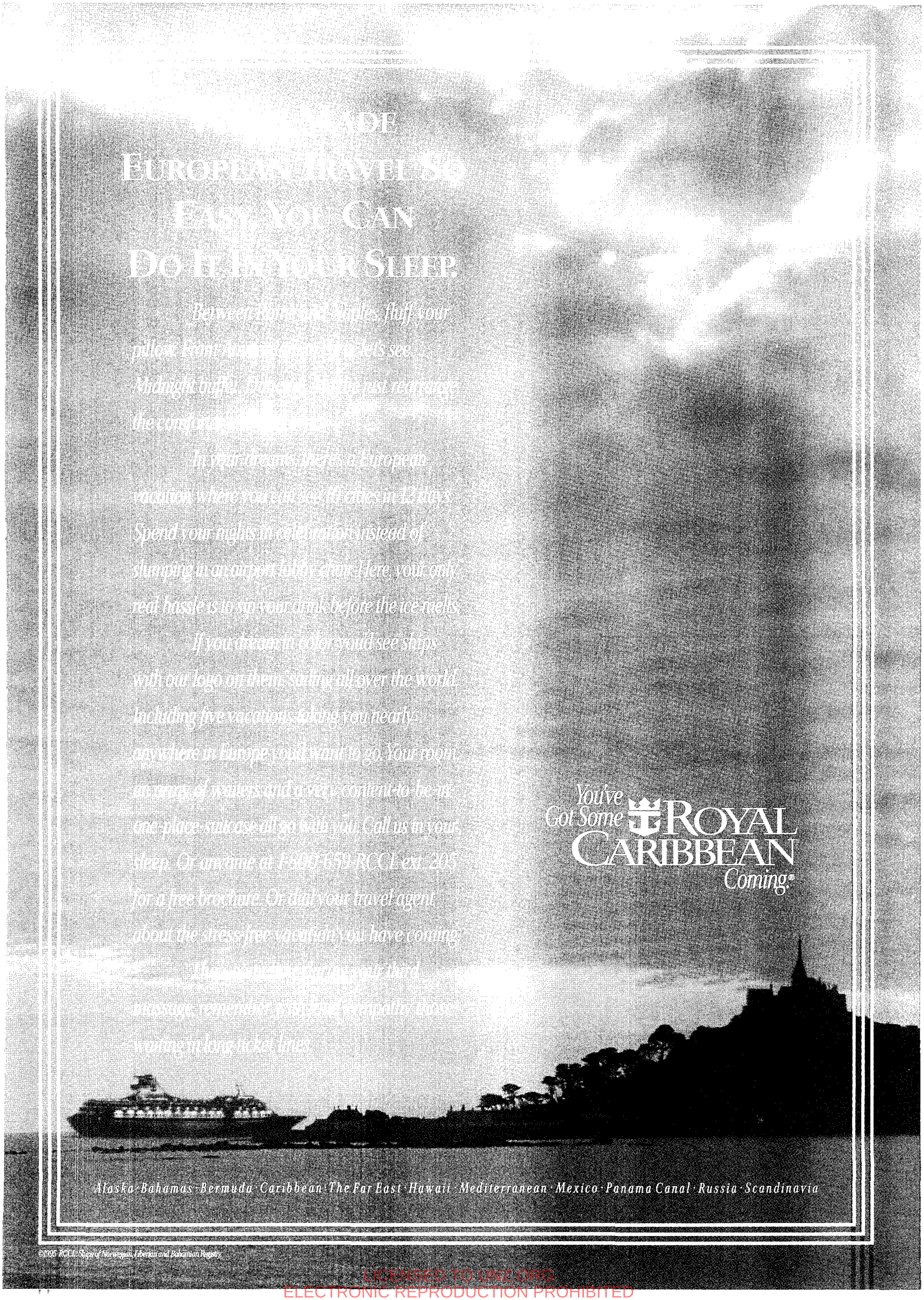
PRETTY soon, Biff won't have to be so vigilant about his diet. After he appears at the Westminster Kennel Club's show, this week, he will retire from active show life and work full time as a stud. It's a good moment for him to retire. Last year, he won more shows than any other boxer, and also more than any other dog in the purebred category known as Working Dogs, which also includes Akitas, Alaskan malamutes, Bernese mountain dogs, bullmastiffs, Doberman pinschers, giant schnauzers, Great Danes, Great Pyrenees, komondors, kuvaszok, mastiffs, Newfoundlands, Portuguese water dogs, Rottweilers, St. Bernards, Samoyeds, Siberian huskies, and standard schnauzers. Boxers were named for their habit of standing on their hind legs and punching with their front paws when they fight. They were originally bred to be chaperons—to look forbidding while being pleasant to spend time with. Except for show dogs like Biff, most boxers lead a life of relative leisure. Last year at Westminster, Biff was named Best Boxer and Best Working Dog, and he was a serious contender for Best in Show, the highest honor any show dog can hope for. He is a contender to win his breed and group again this year, and is a serious contender once again for Best in Show, although the odds are against him, because this year's judge is known as a poodle person.

Biff is four years old. He's in his prime. He could stay on the circuit for a few more years, but by stepping aside now he is making room for his sons Trent and Rex, who are just getting into the business, and he's leaving while he's still on top. He'll also spend less time in airplanes, which is the one part of show life he doesn't like, and more time with his owners, William and Tina Truesdale, who might be persuaded to waive his snacking rules.

Biff has a short, tight coat of fox-colored fur, white feet and ankles, and a patch of white on his chest roughly the shape of Maine. His muscles are plainly sketched under his skin, but he isn't bulgy. His face is turned up and pushed in, and has a dark mask, spongy lips, a wishbone-shaped white blaze, and the earnest and slightly careworn expression of a small-town mayor. Someone once told me that he thought Biff looked a little bit like President Clinton. Biff's face is his fortune. There are plenty of people who like boxers with bigger bones and a stockier body and taller shoulders—boxers who look less like marathon runners and more like weight-lifters—but almost everyone agrees that Biff has a nearly perfect head.

"Biff's head is his father's," William Truesdale, a veterinarian, explained to me one day. We were in the Truesdales' living room in Attleboro, which overlooks acres of hilly fenced-in fields. Their house is a big, sunny ranch with a stylish pastel kitchen and boxerabilia on every wall. The Truesdales don't have children, but at any given moment they share their quarters with at least a half-dozen dogs. If you watch a lot of dog-food commercials, you may have seen William—he's the young, handsome, dark-haired veterinarian declaring his enthusiasm for Pedigree Mealtime while his boxers gallop around.

"Biff has a masculine but elegant head," William went on. "It's not too wet around the muzzle. It's just about ideal. Of course, his forte is right here." He pointed to Biff's withers, and explained that Biff's shoulder-humerus articulation was optimally angled, and bracketed his superb brisket and forelegs, or something like that. While William was talking, Biff climbed onto the couch and sat on top of Brian, his companion, who was hiding under a pillow. Brian is an English toy Prince Charles spaniel who is about the size of a teakettle and has the composure of a hummingbird. As a young competitor, he once bit a judge—a mistake Tina Truesdale says he made because at the time he had been going through a little mind problem about being touched. Brian, whose show name is Champion Cragmor's Hi-Tech Man, will soon go back on the circuit, but now he mostly serves as Biff's regular escort. When Biff sat on him, he started to quiver. Biff bat-



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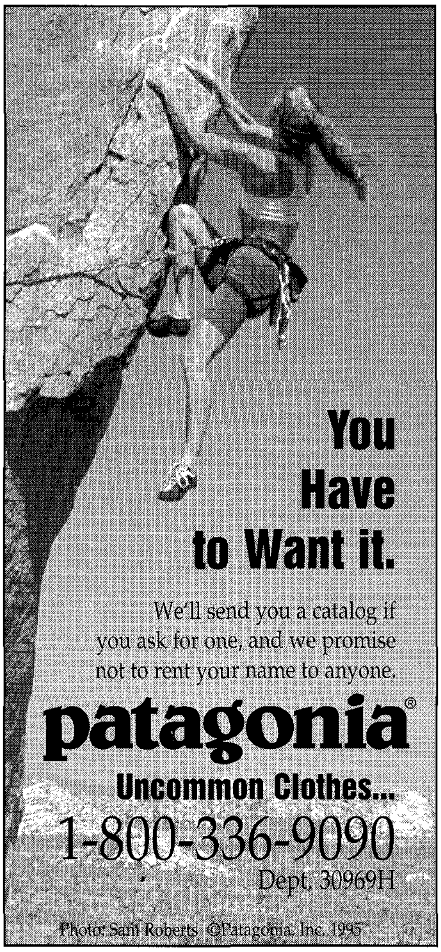
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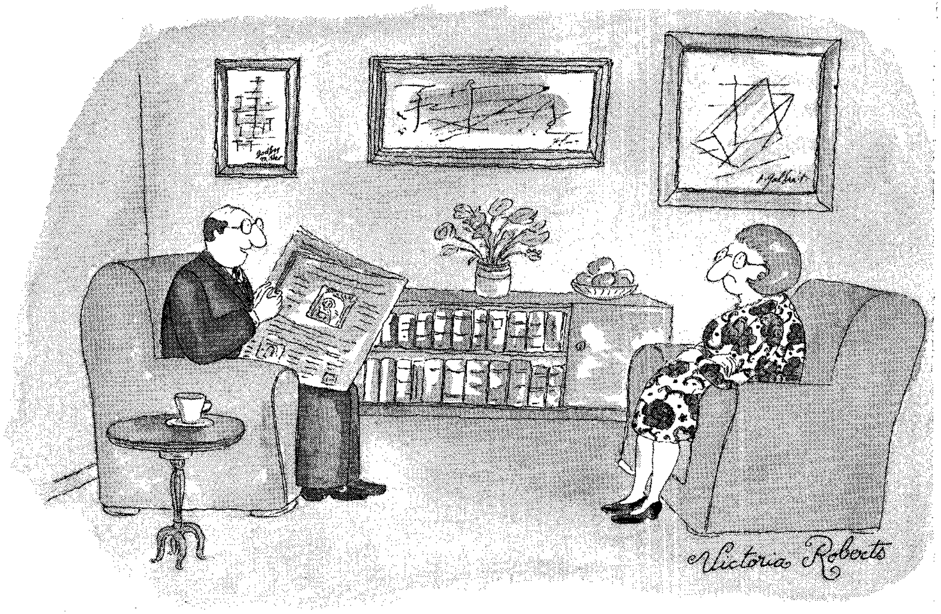


"I suggest you air your woes through the media."

• •

ted at him with his front leg. Brian gave him an adoring look.

"Biff's body is from his mother," Tina was saying. "She had a lot of substance."

"She was even a little extreme for a bitch," William said. "She was rather buxom. I would call her zaftig."

"Biff's father needed that, though," Tina said. "His name was Tailo, and he was fabulous. Tailo had a very beautiful head, but he was a bit fine, I think. A bit slender."

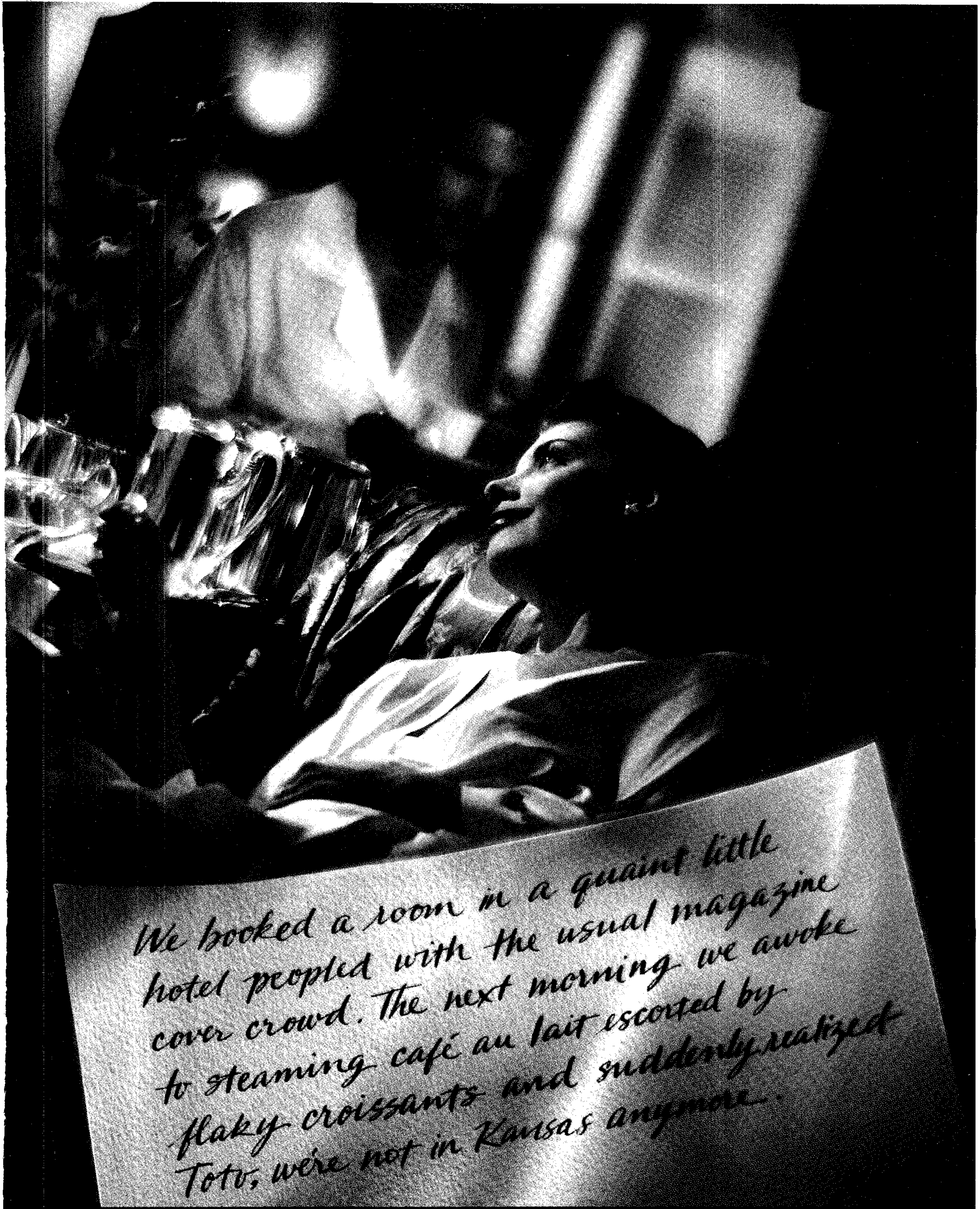
"Even a little feminine," William said, with feeling. "Actually, he would have been a really awesome bitch."

THE first time I met Biff, he sniffed my pants, stood up on his hind legs and stared into my face, and then trotted off to the kitchen, where someone was cooking macaroni. We were in Westbury, Long Island, where Biff lives with Kimberly Pastella, a twenty-nine-year-old professional handler, when he's working. Last year, Kim and Biff went to at least one show every weekend. If they drove, they took Kim's van. If they flew, she went coach and he went cargo. They always shared a hotel room.

While Kim was telling me all this, I could hear Biff rummaging around in the kitchen. "Biffers!" Kim called out. Biff jogged back into the room with a phony look of surprise on his face. His tail was ticking back and forth. It is cropped so that it is about the size and shape of a half-smoked stogie. Kim said that there was a bitch downstairs who had been sent from Pennsylvania to be bred to one of Kim's other clients, and that Biff could smell her and was a little out of sorts. "Let's go," she said to him. "Biff, let's go jog." We went into the garage, where a treadmill was set up with Biff's collar suspended from a metal arm. Biff hopped on and held his head out so that Kim could buckle his collar. As soon as she leaned toward the power switch, he started to jog. His nails clicked a light tattoo on the rubber belt.

Except for a son of his named Biffle, Biff gets along with everybody. Matt Stander, one of the founders of *Dog News*, said recently, "Biff is just very, very personable. He has a je ne sais quoi that's really special. He gives of himself all the time." One afternoon, the Truesdales were telling me about the psychology that went into making Biff who he is. "Boxers are real communicators," William was saying. "We had to really take that into consideration in his upbringing. He seems tough, but there's a fragile ego inside there. The profound reaction and hurt when you would raise your voice at him was really something."

"I *made* him," Tina said. "I made Biff


We booked a room in a quaint little
hotel peopled with the usual magazine
cover crowd. The next morning we awoke
to steaming café au lait escorted by
flaky croissants and suddenly realized
Toto, we're not in Kansas anymore.

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who he is. He had an overbearing personality when he was small, but I consider that a prerequisite for a great performer. He had such an *attitude!* He was like this miniature *man!*" She shimmied her shoulders back and forth and thrust out her chin. She is a dainty, chic woman with wide-set eyes and the neck of a ballerina. She grew up on a farm in Costa Rica, where dogs were considered just another form of livestock. In 1987, William got her a Rottweiler for a watchdog, and a boxer, because he had always loved boxers, and Tina decided to dabble with them in shows. Now she makes a monogrammed Christmas stocking for each animal in their house, and she watches the tape of Biff winning at Westminster approximately once a week. "Right from the beginning, I made Biff think he was the most fabulous dog in the world," Tina said.

"He doesn't take after me very much," William said. "I'm more of a golden retriever."

"Oh, he has my nature," Tina said. "I'm very strong-willed. I'm brassy. And Biff is an egotistical, self-centered, selfish person. He thinks he's very important and special, and he doesn't like to share."

BIFF is priceless. If you beg the Truesdales to name a figure, they might say that Biff is worth around a hundred thousand dollars, but they will also point out that a Japanese dog fancier recently handed Tina a blank check for Biff. (She immediately threw it away.) That check notwithstanding, campaigning a show dog is a money-losing proposition for the owner. A good handler gets three or four hundred dollars a day, plus travel expenses, to show a dog, and any dog aiming for the top will have to be on the road at least a hundred days a year. A dog photographer charges hundreds of dollars for a portrait, and a portrait is something that every serious owner commissions, and then runs as a full-page ad in several dog-show magazines. Advertising a show dog is standard procedure if you want your dog or your presence on the show circuit to get well known. There are also such ongoing show-dog expenses as entry fees, haircare products, food, health care, and toys. Biff's stud fee is six hundred dollars. Now that he will not be at shows, he can be bred several times a month. Breeding him would have been a good way for him to make money in the past, except that whenever the Truesdales were enthusiastic about a mating they bartered Biff's service for the pick of the litter. As a result, they now have more Biff puppies than Biff earnings. "We're doing this for posterity," Tina says. "We're doing it for the good of all boxers. You simply can't think about the cost."

On a recent Sunday, I went to watch Biff work at one of the last shows he would attend before his retirement. The show was sponsored by the Lehigh Valley Kennel Club and was held in a big, windy field house on the campus of Lehigh University, in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. The parking lot was filled with motor homes pasted with life-size decals of dogs. On my way to the field house, I passed someone walking an Afghan hound wearing a snood, and someone else wiping down a Saluki with a Flintstones beach towel. Biff was napping in his crate—a fancy-looking brass box with bright silver hardware and with luggage tags from Delta, USAir, and Continental hanging on the door. Dogs in crates can look woeful, but Biff actually likes spending time in his. When he was growing up, the Truesdales decided they would never reprimand him, because of his delicate ego. Whenever he got rambunctious, Tina wouldn't scold him—she would just invite him to sit in his crate and have a time-out.

On this particular day, Biff was in the crate with a bowl of water and a gourmet Oinkeroll. The boxer judging was already over. There had been thirty-three in competition, and Biff had won Best in Breed. Now he had to wait for several hours while the rest of the working breeds had their competitions. Later, the breed winners would square off for Best in Working Group. Then, around dinnertime, the winner of the Working Group and the winners of the other groups—sporting dogs, hounds, terriers, toys, non-sporting dogs, and herding dogs—would compete for Best in Show. Biff was stretched out in the crate with his head resting on his forelegs, so that his lips draped over his ankle like a café

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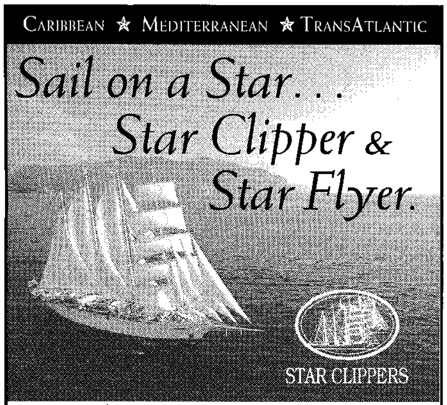

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curtain. He looked bored. Next to his crate, several wire-haired fox terriers were standing on tables getting their faces shampooed, and beyond them a Chihuahua in a pink crate was gnawing on its door latch. Two men in white shirts and dark pants walked by eating hot dogs. One of them was gesturing and exclaiming, "I thought I had good dachshunds! I thought I had *great* dachshunds!"

Biff sighed and closed his eyes.

While he was napping, I pawed through his suitcase. In it was some dog food; towels; an electric nail grinder; a whisker trimmer; a wool jacket in a lively pattern that looked sort of Southwestern; an apron; some antibiotics; baby oil; coconut-oil coat polish; boxer chalk powder; a copy of *Dog News;* an issue of *ShowSight* magazine, featuring an article subtitled "Frozen Semen—Boon or Bain?" and a two-page ad for Biff, with a full-page, full-color photograph of him and Kim posed in front of a human-size toy soldier; a spray bottle of fur cleanser; another Oinkeroll; a rope ball; and something called a Booda Bone. The apron was for Kim. The baby oil was to make Biff's nose and feet glossy when he went into the ring. Boxer chalk powder—as distinct from, say, West Highland-white-terrier chalk powder—is formulated to cling to short, sleek boxer hair and whiten boxers' white markings. Unlike some of the other dogs, Biff did not need to travel with a blow dryer, curlers, nail polish, or detangling combs, but, unlike some less sought-after dogs, he did need a schedule. He was registered for a show in Chicago the next day, and had an appointment at a clinic in Connecticut the next week to make a semen deposit, which had been ordered by a breeder in Australia. Also, he had a date that same week with a bitch named Diana who was about to go into heat. Biff has to book his stud work after shows, so that it doesn't interfere with his performance. Tina Truesdale told me that this was typical of all athletes, but everyone who knows Biff is quick to comment on how professional he is as a stud. Richard Krieger, who was going to be driving Biff to his appointment at the clinic in Connecticut, once told me that some studs want to goof around and take forever but Biff is very businesslike. "Bing, bang, boom," Krieger said. "He's in, he's out."

"No wasting of time," said Nancy Krieger, Richard's wife. "Bing, bang, boom. He gets the job done."

After a while, Kim showed up and asked Biff if he needed to go outside. Then a handler who is a friend of Kim's came by. He was wearing a black-and-white houndstooth suit and was brandishing a comb and a can of hair spray. While they were talking, I leafed through the show catalogue and read some of the dogs' names to Biff, just for fun—names like Aleph Godol's Umbra Von Carousel and Champion Spanktown Little Lu Lu and Ranchlake's Energizer O'Motown and Champion Beaverbrook Buster V Broadhead. Biff decided that he did want to go out, so Kim opened the crate. He stepped out and stretched and yawned like a cat, and then he suddenly stood up and punched me in the chest. An announcement calling for all toys to report to their ring came over the loudspeaker. Kim's friend waved the can of hair spray in the direction of a little white poodle shivering on a table a few yards away and exclaimed, "Oh, no! I lost track of time! I have to go! I have to spray up my miniature!"

TYPICALLY, dog contestants first circle the ring together; then each contestant poses individually for the judge, trying to look perfect as the judge lifts its lips for a dental exam, rocks its hindquarters, and strokes its back and thighs. The judge at Lehigh was a chesty, mustached man with watery eyes and a grave expression. He directed the group with hand signals that made him appear to be roping cattle. The Rottweiler looked good, and so did the giant schnauzer. I started to worry. Biff had a distracted look on his face, as if he'd forgotten something back at the house. Finally, it was his turn. He pranced to the center of the ring. The judge stroked him and then waved his hand in a circle and stepped out of the way. Several people near me began clapping. A flashbulb flared. Biff held his position for a moment, and then he and Kim bounded across the ring, his feet moving so fast that they blurred into an oily sparkle, even though he really didn't have very far to go. He got a cookie when he finished the performance, and another a few minutes later, when the judge wagged his finger at him, indicating that Biff had won again.

You can't help wondering whether Biff will experience the depressing letdown that retired competitors face. At least, he has a lot of stud work to look forward to, although William Truesdale complained to me once that the Truesdales' standards for a mate are so high—they require a clean bill of health and a substantial pedigree—that "there just aren't that many right bitches out there." Nonetheless, he and Tina are optimistic that Biff will find enough suitable mates to become one of the most influential boxer sires of all time. "We'd like to be remembered as the boxer people of the nineties," Tina said. "Anyway, we can't wait to have him home."

"We're starting to campaign Biff's son Rex," William said. "He's been living in Mexico, and he's a Mexican champion, and now he's ready to take on the American shows. He's very promising. He has a fabulous rear."

Just then, Biff, who had been on the couch, jumped down and began pacing. "Going somewhere, honey?" Tina asked.

He wanted to go out, so Tina opened the back door, and Biff ran into the back yard. After a few minutes, he noticed a ball on the lawn. The ball was slippery and a little too big to fit in his mouth, but he kept scrambling and trying to grab it. In the meantime, the Truesdales and I sat, stayed for a moment, fetched ourselves turkey sandwiches, and then curled up on the couch. Half an hour passed, and Biff was still happily pursuing the ball. He probably has a very short memory, but he acted as if it were the most fun he'd ever had. ♦

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[*From the Los Angeles Times*]

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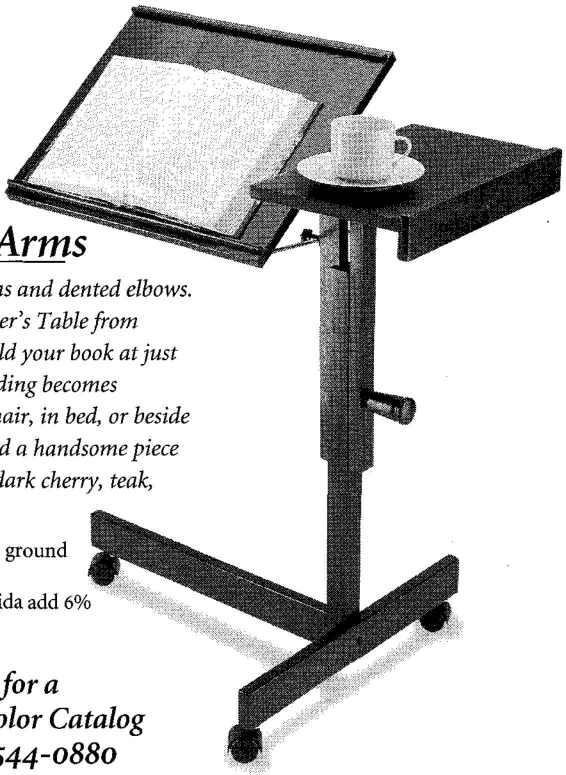

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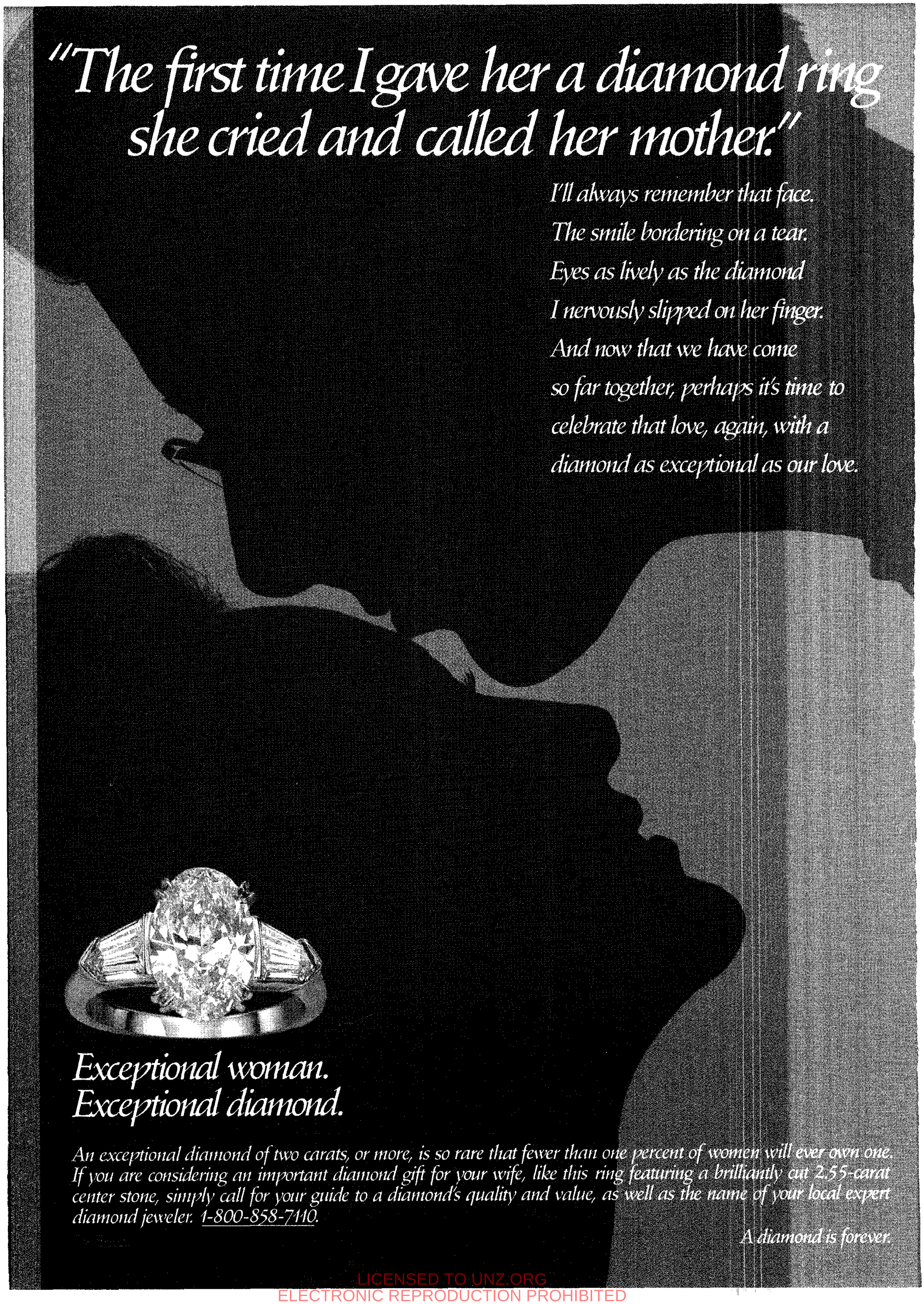

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LETTER FROM BROOKLYN

TAKE THE F

In the borough with more people than any other, you can also find broken glass, pizza, roses, ducks with accents, and crabs that ride the subway.

BY IAN FRAZIER

BROOKLYN, NEW YORK, has the undefined, hard-to-remember shape of a stain. I never know what to tell people when they ask me where in it I live. It sits at the western tip of Long Island at a diagonal that does not conform neatly to the points of the compass. People in Brooklyn do not describe where they live in terms of north or west or south. They refer instead to their neighborhoods, and to the nearest subway lines. I live on the edge of Park Slope, a neighborhood by the crest of a low ridge that runs through the borough. Prospect Park is across the street. Airplanes in the landing pattern for LaGuardia Airport sometimes fly right over my building; every few minutes, on certain sunny days, perfectly detailed airplane shadows slide down my building and up the building opposite in a blink. You can see my building from the plane—it's on the left-hand side of Prospect Park, the longer patch of green you cross after the expanse of Green-Wood Cemetery.

GARY PANTER

We moved to a co-op apartment in a four-story building a week before our daughter was born. She is now six. I grew up in the country and would not have expected ever to live in Brooklyn. My daughter is a city kid, with less sympathy for certain other parts of the country. When we visited Montana, she was disappointed by the scarcity of pizza places. I overheard her explaining—she was three or four then—to a Montana kid about Brooklyn. She said, "In Brooklyn, there is a lot of broken glass, so you have to wear shoes. And, there is good pizza." She is stern in her judgment of pizza. At the very low end of the pizza-ranking scale is some pizza she once had in New Hampshire, a category now called New Hampshire pizza. In the middle is some O.K. pizza she once had at the Bronx Zoo, which she calls zoo pizza. At the very top is the pizza at the pizza place where the big kids go, about two blocks from our house.

Our subway is the F train. It runs under our building and shakes the floor. The F is generally a reliable train, but one spring as I walked in the park I saw emergency vehicles gathered by a concrete-sheathed hole in the lawn. Firemen lifted a metal lid from the hole and descended into it. After a while, they reappeared, followed by a few people, then dozens of people, then a whole lot of people—passengers from a disabled F train, climbing one at a time out an exit shaft. On the F, I sometimes see large women in straw hats reading a newspaper called the *Caribbean Sunrise*, and Orthodox Jews bent over Talmudic texts in which the footnotes have footnotes, and groups of teenagers wearing identical red bandannas with identical red plastic baby pacifiers in the corners of their mouths, and female couples in porkpie hats, and young men with the silhouettes of the Manhattan skyline razored into their short side hair from one temple around to the other, and Russian-speaking men with thick wrists and big wristwatches, and a hefty, tall woman with long, straight blond hair who hums and closes her eyes and absently practices cello fingerings on the metal subway pole. As I watched the F-train passengers emerge among the grass and trees of Prospect Park, the faces were as varied as usual, but the expressions of indignant surprise were all about the same.

Just past my stop, Seventh Avenue, Manhattan-bound F trains rise from underground to cross the Gowanus Canal. The train sounds different—lighter, quieter—in the open air. From the elevated tracks, you can see the roofs of many houses stretching back up the hill to Park Slope, and a bumper crop of rooftop graffiti, and neon signs for Eagle Clothes and Kentile Floors, and flat expanses of factory roofs where seagulls stand on one leg around puddles in the sagging spots. There are fuel-storage tanks surrounded by earthen barriers, and slag piles, and conveyor belts leading down to the oil-slicked waters of the canal. On certain days, the sludge at the bottom of the canal causes it to bubble. Two men fleeing the police jumped in the canal a while ago; one made it across, the other quickly died. When the subway doors open at the Smith–Ninth Street stop, you can see the bay, and sometimes smell the ocean breeze. This stretch of elevated is the highest point of the New York subway system. To the south you can see the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge, to the north the World Trade towers. For just a few moments, the Statue of Liberty appears between passing buildings. Pieces of a neighborhood—laundry on clotheslines, a standup swimming pool, a plaster saint, a satellite dish, a rectangle of lawn—slide by like quickly dealt cards. Then the train descends again; growing over the wall

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just before the tunnel is a wisteria bush, which blooms pale blue every May.

I have spent days, weeks on the F train. The trip from Seventh Avenue to midtown Manhattan is long enough so that every ride can produce its own minisociety of riders, its own forty-minute Ship of Fools. Once a woman an arm's length from me on a crowded train pulled a knife on a man who threatened her. I remember the argument and the principals, but mostly I remember the knife—its flat, curved wood-grain handle inlaid with brass fittings at each end, its long, tapered blade. Once a man sang the words of the Lord's Prayer to a mournful, syncopated tune, and he fitted the mood of the morning so exactly that when he asked for money at the end the riders reached for their wallets and purses as if he'd pulled a gun. Once a big white kid with some friends was teasing a small old Hispanic lady, and when he got off the train I looked at him through the window and he slugged it hard next to my face. Once a thin woman and a fat woman sitting side by side had a long and loud conversation about someone they intended to slap silly: "Her butt be in the *hospital!*" "Bring out the ar-*tillery!*" The terminus of the F in Brooklyn is at Coney Island, not far from the beach. At an off hour, I boarded the train and found two or three passengers and, walking around on the floor, a crab. The passengers were looking at the crab. Its legs clicked on the floor like varnished fingernails. It moved in this direction, then that, trying to get comfortable. It backed itself under a seat, against the wall. Then it scooted out just after some new passengers had sat down there, and they really screamed. Passengers at the next stop saw it and laughed. When a boy lifted his foot as if to stomp it, everybody cried, "Noooh!" By the time we reached Jay Street–Borough Hall, there were maybe a dozen of us in the car, all absorbed in watching the crab. The car doors opened and a heavyset woman with good posture entered. She looked at the crab; then, sternly, at all of us. She let a moment pass. Then she demanded, "*Whose* is *that?*" A few stops later, a short man with a mustache took a manila envelope, bent down, scooped the crab into it, closed it, and put it in his coat pocket.

THE smells in Brooklyn: coffee, fingernail polish, eucalyptus, the breath from laundry rooms, pot roast, Tater Tots. A woman I know who grew up here says she moved away because she could not stand the smell of cooking food in the hallway of her parents' building. I feel just the opposite. I used to live in a converted factory above an Army-Navy store, and I like being in a place that smells like people live there. In the mornings, I sometimes wake to the smell of toast, and I still don't know exactly whose toast it is. And I prefer living in a borough of two and a half million inhabitants, the most of any borough in the city. I think of all the rural places, the pine-timbered canyons and within-commuting-distance farmland, that we are preserving by not living there. I like the immensities of the borough, the unrolling miles of Eastern Parkway and Ocean Parkway and Linden Boulevard, and the dishevelled outlying parks strewn with tree limbs and with shards of glass held together by liquor-bottle labels, and the tough bridges—the Williamsburg and the Manhattan—and the gentle Brooklyn Bridge. And I like the way the people talk; some really do have Brooklyn accents, really do say "dese" and "dose." A week or two ago, a group of neighbors stood on a street corner watching a peregrine falcon on a building cornice contentedly eating a pigeon it had caught, and the sunlight came through its tail feathers, and a woman said to a man, "Look at the tail, it's so ah-range," and the man replied, "Yeah, I soar it." Like many Americans, I fear living in a nowhere, in a place that is no-place; in Brooklyn, that doesn't trouble me at all.

Everybody, it seems, is here. At Grand Army Plaza, I have seen traffic tieups caused by Haitians and others rallying in support of President Aristide, and by St. Patrick's Day parades, and by Jews of the Lubavitcher sect celebrating the birthday of their Grand Rebbe with a slow procession of ninety-three motor homes—one for each year of his life. Local taxis have bumper stickers that say "Allah Is Great"; one of the men who made the bomb that blew up the World Trade Center used an apartment just a few blocks from me. When an election is held in Russia, crowds line up to cast ballots at a Russian polling place in Brighton Beach. A while ago, I volunteer-taught reading at a public elementary school across the park. One of my students, a girl, was part Puerto Rican, part Greek, and part Welsh. Her looks were a lively combination, set off by sea-green eyes. I went to a

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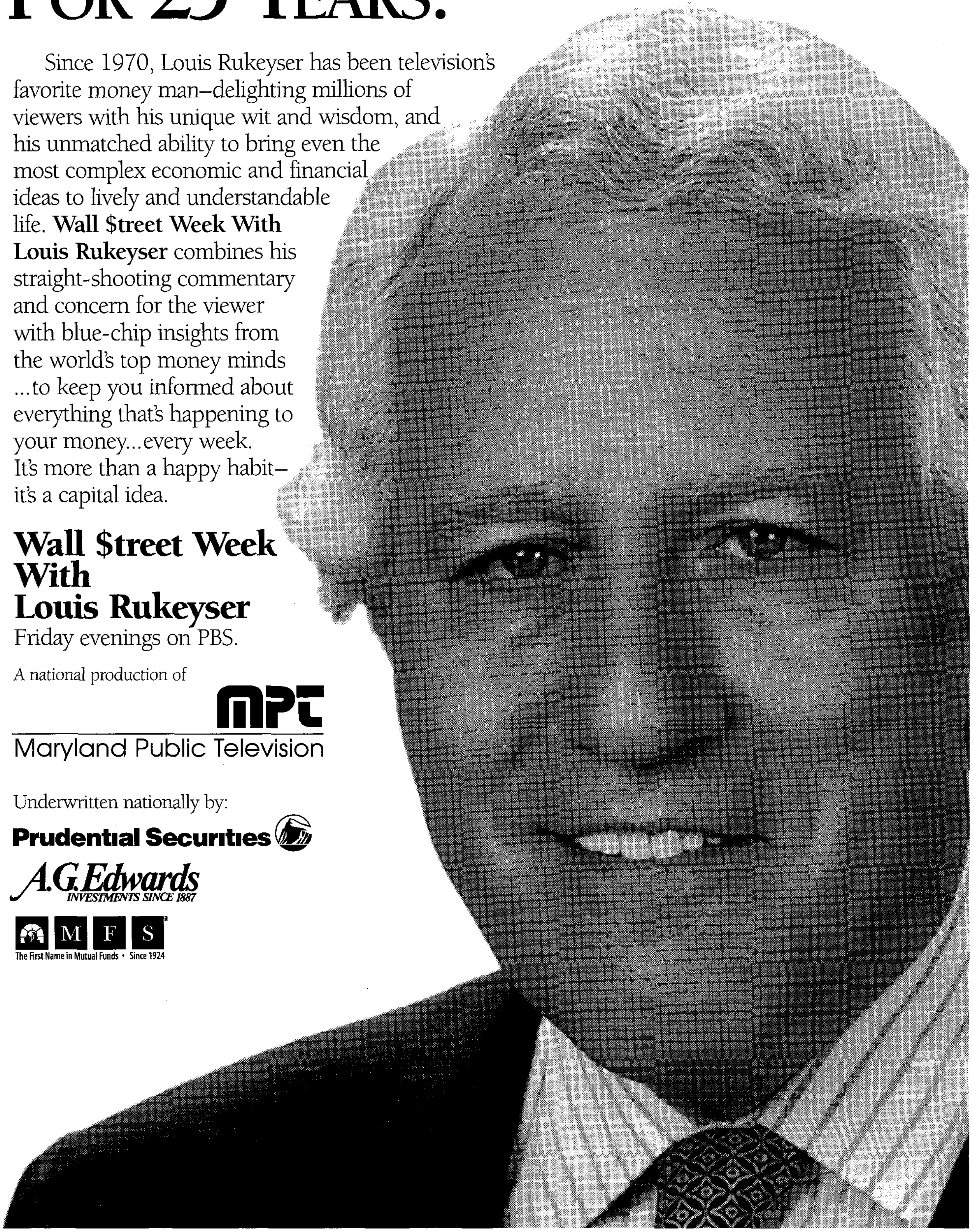

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map store in Manhattan and bought maps of Puerto Rico, Greece, and Wales to read with her, but they didn't interest her. A teacher at the school was directing a group of students to set up chairs for a program in the auditorium, and she said to me, "We have a problem here—each of these kids speaks a different language." She asked the kids to tell me where they were from. One was from Korea, one from Brazil, one from Poland, one from Guyana, one from Taiwan. In the program that followed, a chorus of fourth and fifth graders sang "God Bless America," "You're a Grand Old Flag," and "I'm a Yankee-Doodle Dandy."

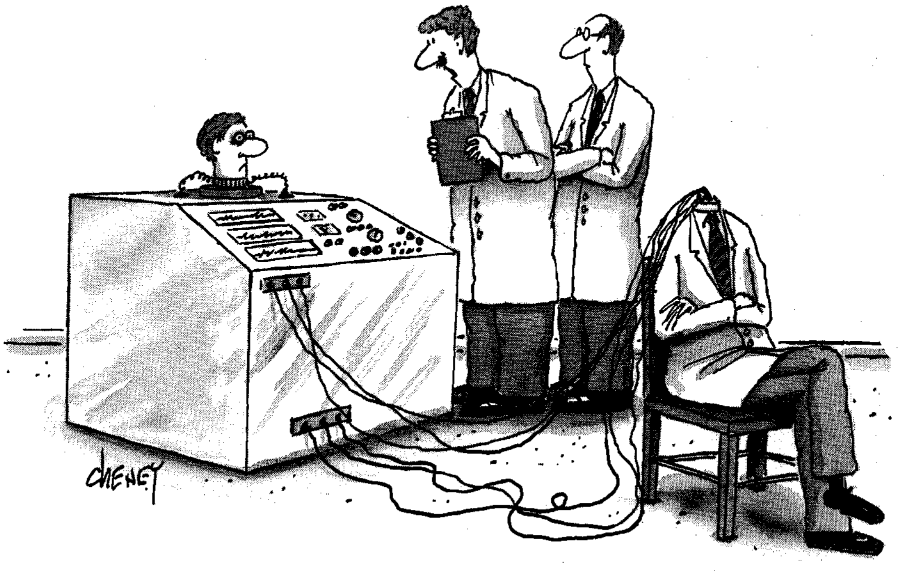
People in my neighborhood are mostly white, and middle class or above. People in neighborhoods nearby are mostly not white, and mostly middle class or below. Everybody uses Prospect Park. On summer days, the park teems with sound—the high note is kids screaming in the water sprinklers at the playground, the midrange is radios and tape players, and the bass is idling or speeding cars. People bring lawn furniture and badminton nets and coolers, and then they barbecue. Charcoal smoke drifts into the neighborhood. Last year, local residents upset about the noise and litter and smoke began a campaign to outlaw barbecuing in the park. There was much unfavorable comment about "the barbecuers." Since most of the barbecuers, as it happens, are black or Hispanic, the phrase "Barbecuers Go Home," which someone spray-painted on the asphalt at the Ninth Street entrance to the park, took on a pointed, unkind meaning. But then park officials set up special areas for barbecuing, and the barbecuers complied, and the controversy died down.

Right nearby is a shelter for homeless people. Sometimes people sleep on the benches along the park, sometimes they sleep in the foyer of our building. Once I went downstairs, my heart pounding, to evict a homeless person who I had been told was there. The immediate, unquestioning way she left made me feel bad; later I always said "Hi" to her and gave her a dollar when I ran into her. One night, late, I saw her on the street, and I asked her her last name (by then I already knew her first name) and for a moment she couldn't recall it. At this, she shook her head in mild disbelief.

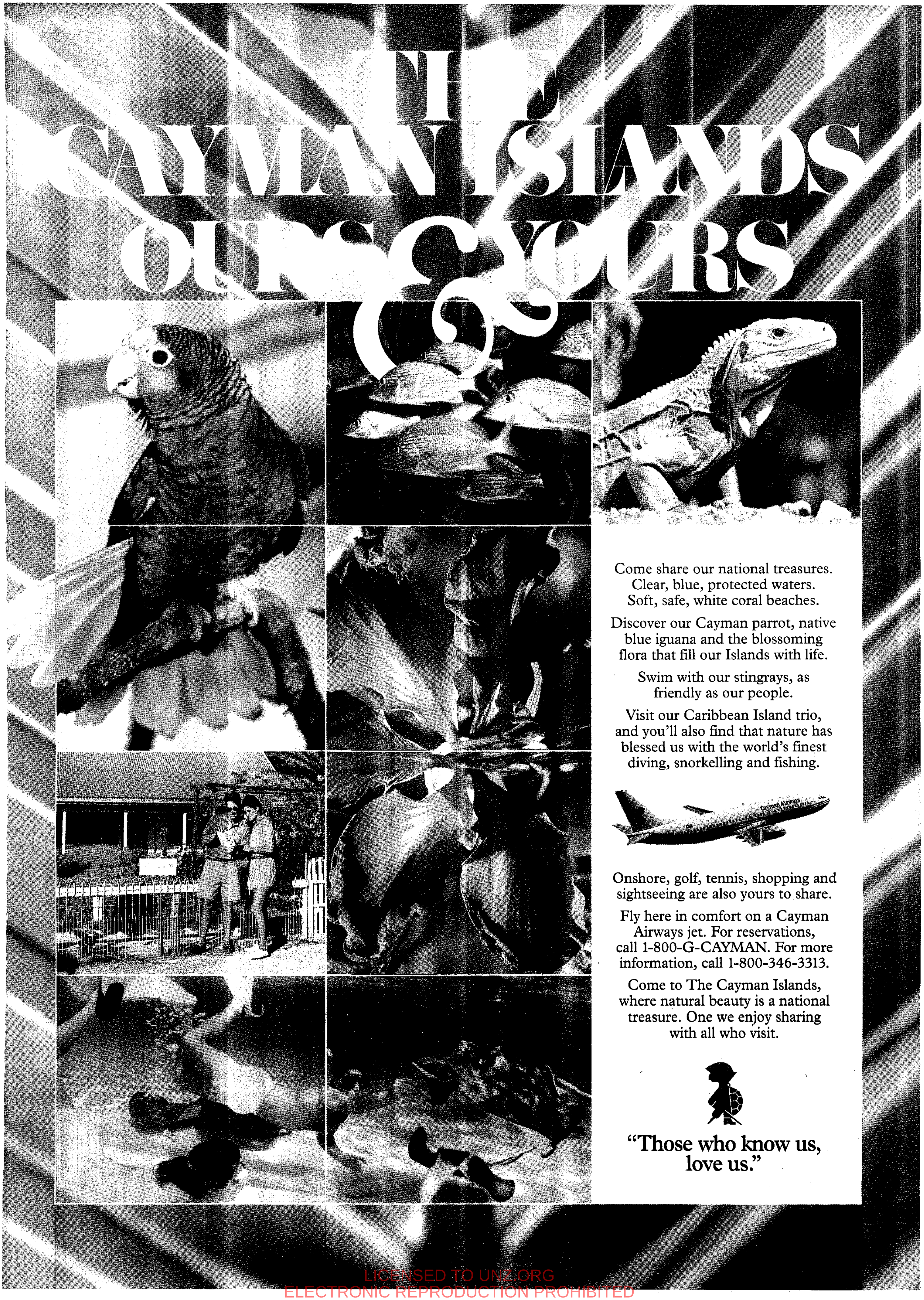
There's a guy I see on a bench along Prospect Park West all the time. Once I walked by carrying my year-old son, and the man said, "Someday he be carrying you." At the local copy shop one afternoon, a crowd was waiting for copies and faxes when a man in a houndstooth fedora came in seeking signatures for a petition to have the homeless shelter shut down. To my surprise, and his, the people in the copy shop instantly turned on him. "I suppose because they're poor they shouldn't even have a place to sleep at night," a woman said as he backed out the door. On the park wall across the street from my building, someone has written in black marker:

Cops protect citizens
Who protect us from cops.

SOMETIMES I walk from my building downhill and north, along the Brooklyn waterfront, where cargo ships



"Bad news, Phil—due to federal funding cutbacks, we can't afford to put your head back on."



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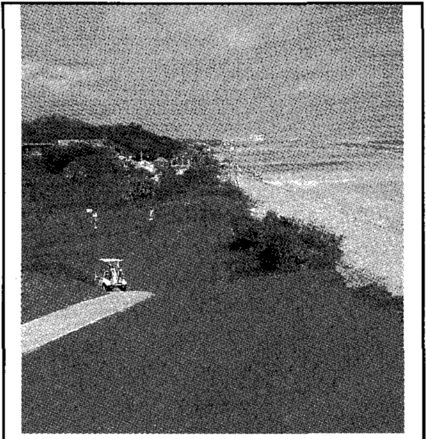

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with scuffed sides and prognathous bows lean overhead. Sometimes I walk by the Brooklyn Navy Yard, its docks now too dormant to attract saboteurs, its long expanses of chain-link fence tangled here and there with the branches of ailanthus trees growing through. Sometimes I head southwest, keeping more or less to the high ground—Bay Ridge—along Fifth Avenue, through Hispanic neighborhoods that stretch in either direction as far as you can see, and then through block after block of Irish. I follow the ridge to its steep descent to the water at the Verrazano Narrows; Fort Hamilton, an Army post dating from 1814, is there, and a small Episcopal church called the Church of the Generals. Robert E. Lee once served as a vestryman of this church, and Stonewall Jackson was baptized here. Today the church is in the shade of a forest of high concrete columns supporting an access ramp to the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge.

Sometimes I walk due south, all the way out Coney Island Avenue. In that direction, as you approach the ocean, the sky gets bigger and brighter, and the buildings seem to flatten beneath it. Dry cleaners advertise "Tallis Cleaned Free with Every Purchase Over Fifteen Dollars." Then you start to see occasional lines of graffiti written in Cyrillic. Just past a Cropsey Avenue billboard welcoming visitors to Coney Island is a bridge over a creek filled nearly to the surface with metal shopping carts that people have tossed there over the years. A little farther on, the streets open onto the beach. On a winter afternoon, bundled-up women sit on the boardwalk on folding chairs around a portable record player outside a restaurant called Gastronom Moscow. The acres of trash-dotted sand are almost empty. A bottle of Peter the Great vodka lies on its side, drops of water from its mouth making a small depression in the sand. A man with trousers rolled up to his shins moves along the beach, chopping at driftwood with an axe. Another passerby says, "He's vorking hard, that guy!" The sunset unrolls light along the storefronts like tape. From the far distance, little holes in the sand at the water's edge mark the approach of a short man wearing hip boots and earphones and carrying a long-handled metal detector. Treasure hunters dream of the jewelry that people must have lost here over the years. Some say that this is the richest treasure beach in the Northeast. The man stops, runs the metal detector again over a spot, digs with a clamming shovel, lifts some sand, brushes through it with a gloved thumb, discards it. He goes on, leaving a trail of holes behind him.

I like to find things myself, and I always try to keep one eye on the ground as I walk. So far I have found seven dollars (a five and two ones), an earring in the shape of a strawberry, several personal notes, a matchbook with a 900 number to call to hear "prison sex fantasies," and two spent .25-calibre shells. Once on Carroll Street, I saw a page of text on the sidewalk, and I bent over to read it. It was page 191 from a copy of "Anna Karenina." I read the whole page. It described Vronsky leaving a gathering and riding off in a carriage. In a great book, the least fragment is great. I looked up and saw a woman regarding me closely from a few feet away. "You're reading," she said wonderingly. "From a distance, I t'ought you were watchin' ants."

MY favorite place to walk is the Brooklyn Botanic Garden, not more than fifteen minutes away. It's the first place I take out-of-towners, who may not associate Brooklyn with flowers. In the winter, the garden is drab as pocket lint, and you can practically see all the way through from Flatbush Avenue to Washington Avenue. But then in February or March a few flowerings begin, the snowdrops and the crocuses, and then the yellow of the daffodils climbs Daffodil Hill, and then the magnolias—star magnolias, umbrella magnolias, saucer magnolias—go off all at once, and walking among them is like flying through cumulus clouds. Then the cherry trees blossom, some a soft and glossy red like makeup, others pink as a dessert, and crowds fill the paths on weekends and stand in front of the blossoms in their best clothes and have their pictures taken. Security guards tell people, "No eating, no sitting on the grass—this is a garden, not a park." There are traffic jams of strollers, and kids running loose. One security guard jokes into his radio, "There's a pterodactyl on the overlook!" In the pond in the Japanese Garden, ducks lobby for pieces of bread. A duck quacks, in Brooklynese, "Yeah, yeah, yeah," having heard it all before.

Then the cherry blossoms fall, they turn some paths completely pink next to

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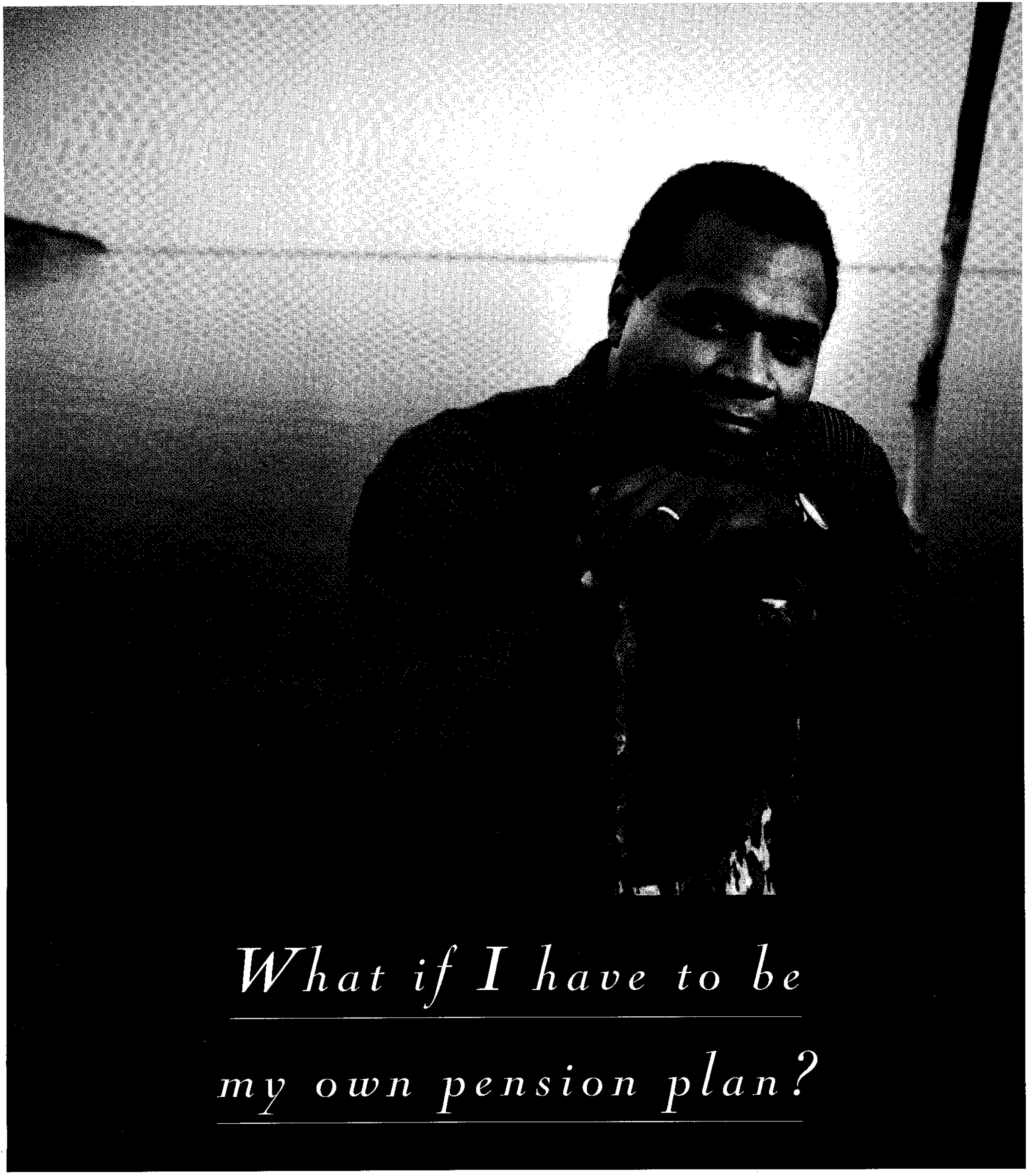

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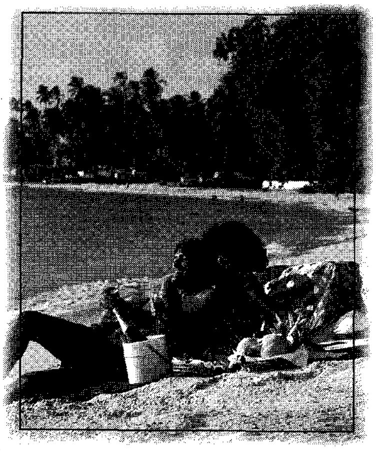

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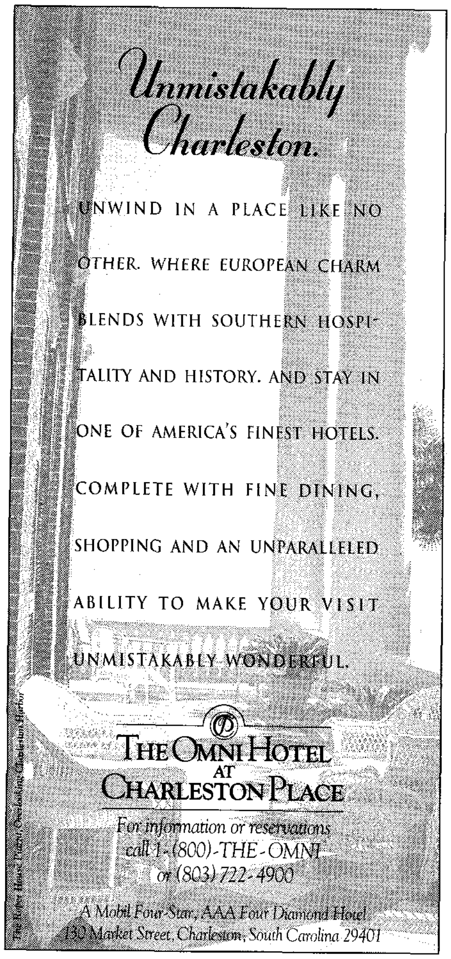

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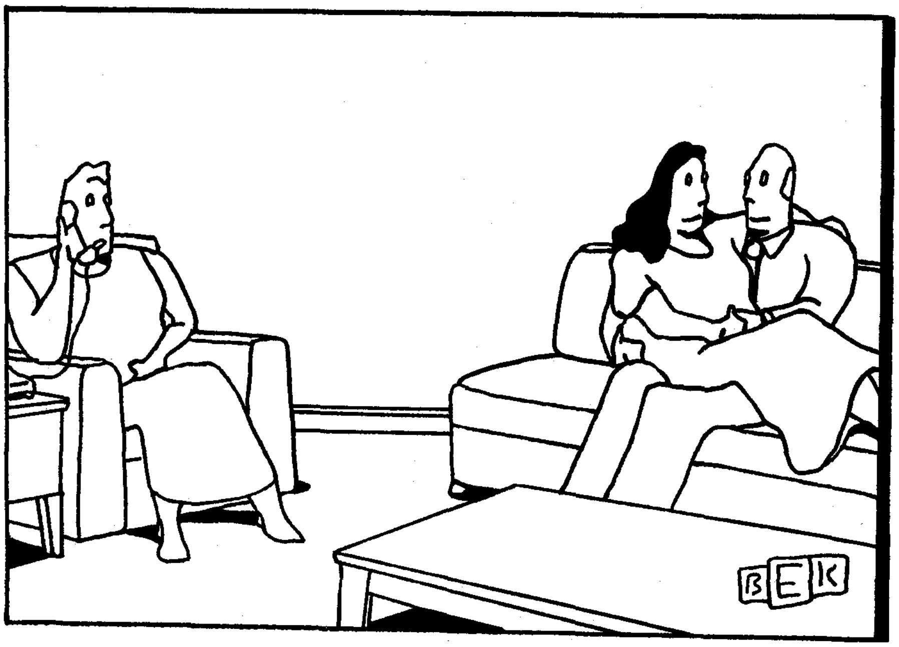

"So you think I should just ignore it?"

• •

the grass's green, and the petals dry, and people tread them into a fine pink powder. Kids visit on end-of-school-year field trips, and teachers yell "Shawon, get back on line!" and boys with long T-shirts printed from neck to knee with an image of Martin Luther King's face run by laughing and swatting at one another. The yellow boxes that photographic film comes in fall on the ground, and here and there an empty bag of Crazy Calypso potato chips. The lilacs bloom, each bush with a scent slightly different from the next, and yellow tulips fill big round planters with color so bright it ascends in a column, like a searchlight beam. The roses open on the trellises in the Rose Garden and attract a lively air traffic of bees, and June wedding parties, brides and grooms and their subsidiaries, adjust themselves minutely for photographers there. A rose called the Royal Gold smells like a new bathing suit, and is as yellow.

In our building of nine apartments, two people have died and six have been born since we moved in. I like our neighbors—a guy who works for Off-Track Betting, a guy who works for the Department of Correction, a woman who works for Dean Witter, an in-flight steward, a salesperson of subsidiary rights at a publishing house, a restaurant manager, two lawyers, a retired machinist, a Lebanese-born woman of ninety-five—as well as any I've ever had. We keep track of the bigger events in the building with the help of Chris, our downstairs neighbor. Chris lives on the ground floor and often has conversations in the hall while her foot props her door open. When our kids are sick, she brings them her kids' videos to watch, and when it rains she gives us rides to school. One year, Chris became pregnant and had to take a blood-thinning medicine and was in and out of the hospital. Finally, she had a healthy baby and came home, but then began to bleed and didn't stop. Her husband brought the baby to us about midnight and took Chris to the nearest emergency room. Early the next morning, the grandmother came and took the baby. Then for two days nobody heard anything. When we knocked on Chris's door we got no answer and when we called we got an answering machine. The whole building was expectant, spooky, quiet. The next morning I left the house and there in the foyer was Chris. She held her husband's arm, and she looked pale, but she was returning from the hospital under her own steam. I hugged her at the door, and it was the whole building hugging her. I walked to the garden seeing glory everywhere. I went to the Rose Garden and took a big Betsy McCall rose to my face and breathed into it as if it were an oxygen mask. ♦

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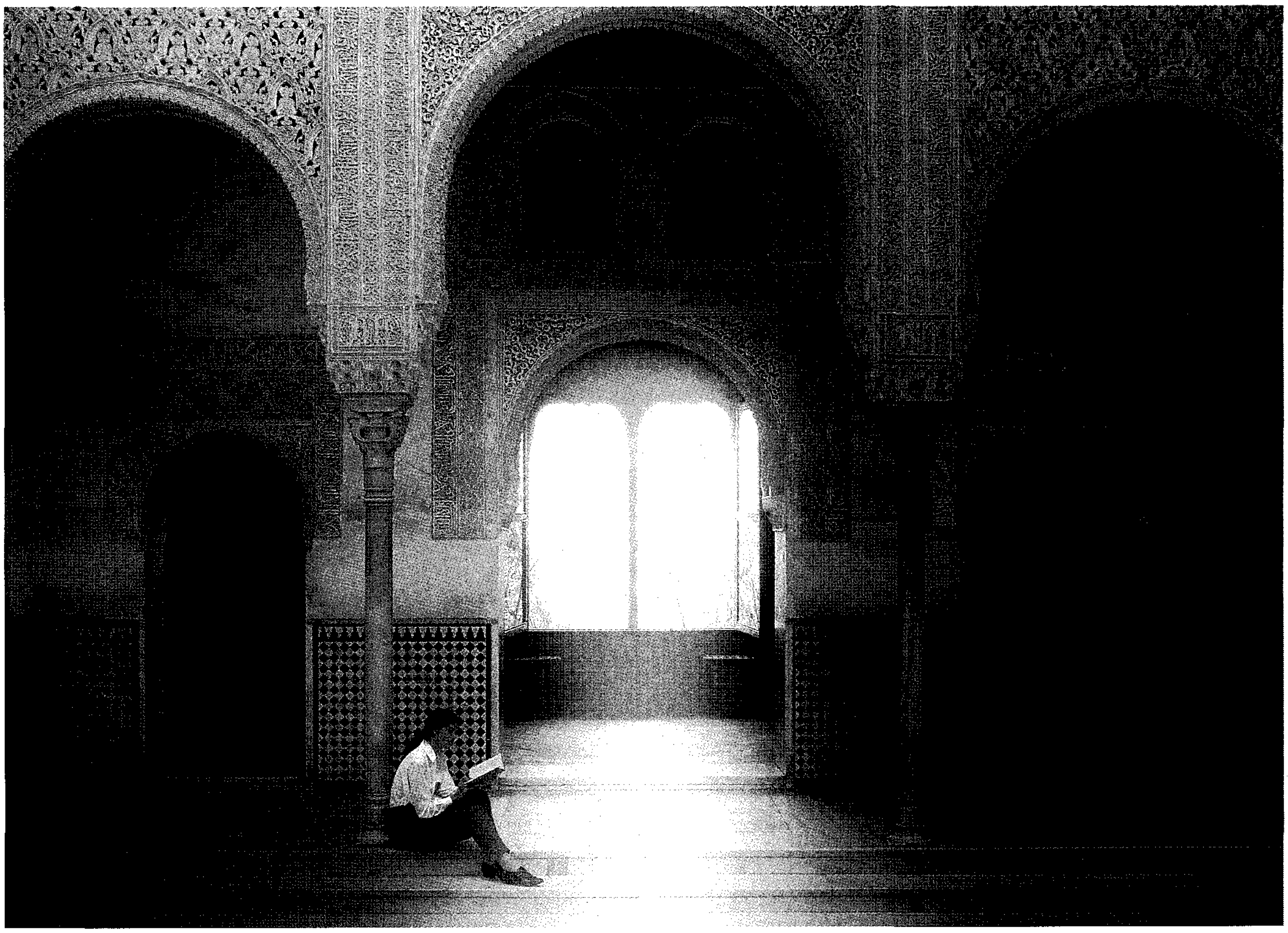

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LIFE AND LETTERS

THE ROSS YEARS

Cajoling and complaining, scolding and wheedling, Harold Ross, the co-founder and first editor of The New Yorker, drove his writers and artists and editors to distraction and to brilliance.

BY CHARLES McGRATH

ONLY one photograph hangs in the hallways of *The New Yorker*—a 1944 Bachrach portrait of a middle-aged man in a pin-striped suit. He has a wide, big-boned face, and he's wearing an expression of wry puzzlement, a corner of his mouth turned up in a half smile. His most noticeable features are his eyes, which look out from behind round horn-rimmed glasses with steady curiosity, and his hair, thick and unruly and apparently plastered down for the occasion, which is now starting to spring up in back, like an unmowed lawn after a rainstorm. The man is Harold Ross, of course, the co-founder and first editor of this magazine, who was at one time not only a commanding presence in the imagination of everyone who worked for him but also a vivid man-about-town—a romantic, unpredictable figure, who seemed to embody much of that singular Jazz Age energy and creativity which transformed American cultural life. Nowadays, Ross is seldom thought of at all, even at the magazine he created. His portrait, gazing out at a seventeenth-floor hallway, is much less of a tourist attraction than James Thurber's wall drawings, which when *The New Yorker* changed addresses, in 1991, were carefully removed from Thurber's old office and mounted behind bulletproof glass down on the sixteenth floor, where they are visited and gawked at regularly. When the Ross portrait, by contrast, was taken down and copied for an exhibition in Japan, in 1992, it took a couple of days before anyone here noticed its absence.

Ross's eclipse may have to do with the nature of editing, as opposed to drawing or writing: when it's done well, it's invisible. Yet lesser editors of Ross's era—for example, Henry Luce and DeWitt Wallace, the founders of *Time* and *Reader's Digest*, respectively—haven't sunk to the same degree of obscurity, perhaps because they weren't just editors but also builders of publishing dynasties, or because they had better P.R. Even during his lifetime, Ross was sometimes treated as a caricature—an ignoramus, a foulmouthed rube, who created *The New Yorker* almost by accident. After his death, in 1951, the process was accelerated. More than anyone else associated with this magazine, Ross has suffered from a common failing of *New Yorker* historiography—the tendency to reduce everyone, and every event, to colorful anecdotes. Ross the Rube made great copy for his friends—he made them look good (or sophisticated) by contrast. As William Shawn (who made equally good anecdotal copy, of another sort) wrote of his predecessor in 1975, "Harold Ross presented himself to the world as a raucous, clumsy, primitive, somewhat comic figure. He said extremely funny things spontaneously and intentionally, and in his conversation and in his physical bearing he was funny unintentionally, or almost unintentionally, as well. . . . Because of this . . . the serious and inspired work that he did as an editor tended at times to be lost sight of."

The problem with the Ross anecdotes is not just that they're selective and incomplete but that they're almost invariably diminishing, often revealing more about the teller than about the subject. In "Ross, The New Yorker, and Me," a 1968 memoir by Ross's first wife, Jane Grant, he is a distant, socially inept bungler who nevertheless possesses some mysterious personal magnetism, and a near genius when it comes to publishing. In Thurber's charming, if inaccurately titled, "The Years with Ross" (it should have been called "The Years with Me"), Ross is irascible and lovable, a Dickensian character wandering around the office with a sheaf of nitpicking memos, muttering "goddammit" with one breath and "God bless" with the next. And by the time Brendan Gill's "Here at The New Yorker" came out, in 1975, Ross had become a "throwback and not always an appealing one"—the kind of fellow whose idea of a good time is to sit in a hotel dining room and toss spitballs or lit matches at the other guests.

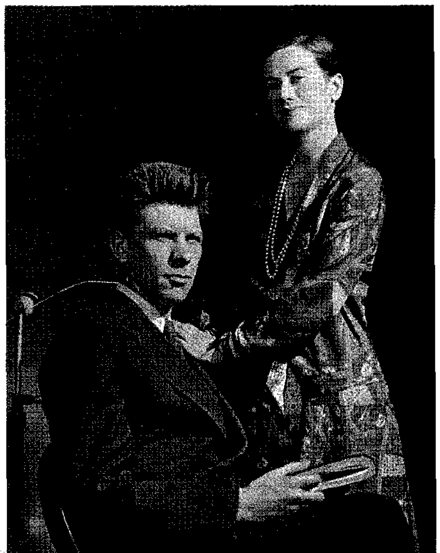
No doubt all these sides coexisted in Ross, and there were probably many more. By various accounts, he was brave, cowardly, cruel, kind, generous, tight-fisted, priggish, profane, shy, and overbearing. Of the remaining handful of people here who actually worked for Ross, no two recall him in quite the same way. A few more of us—carryovers from the Shawn era, mostly—like to imagine that we knew him. Almost unconsciously, we make a point of using snatches of the old Ross editorial lingo ("Who he?") and of writing down phone messages on the little pink memo-routing slips he designed, but the magazine itself has changed, of course, in ways that would no doubt have startled him.

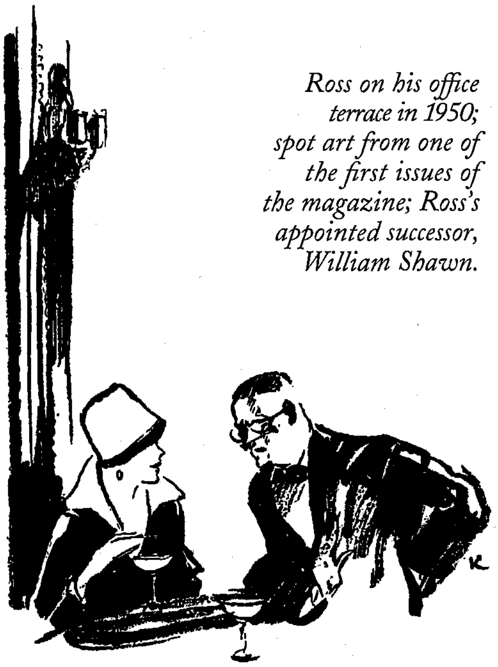
Remarkably, Thomas Kunkel's "Genius in Disguise: Harold Ross of The New Yorker," which will be published next month by Random House, is the first thorough biography of Ross, and the first to try to sift through all the myths and contradictions. Kunkel (who interviewed me and many other people on *The New Yorker* staff) is himself a Ross-like character. A Midwesterner and a former newspaperman, he had never written a book before, and he set about this project without any institutional sponsorship. He talked to vast numbers of people and poked around in the archives, and in the process discovered more about Ross than probably even Ross's closest intimates knew. Inevitably, his book reveals more about Ross's disguises than about his genius, but that

UPI/BETTMANN

Ideas poured out of Ross, and he discussed them not just with the editorial sachems but with the secretaries and the elevator boys.

Harold Ross with the journalist Jane Grant, his first wife, whom he met in a poker game; Ross the boulevardier; Ross (of all things) the fisherman.





Ross on his office terrace in 1950; spot art from one of the first issues of the magazine; Ross's appointed successor, William Shawn.

PHOTOS CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: JANE GRANT COLLECTION/UNIVERSITY OF OREGON, UNDERWOOD & UNDERWOOD/TIME INC. PICTURE COLLECTION, JANET MALCOLM, LILLIAN ROSS, PHOTOGRAPHER UNKNOWN limitation has less to do with Kunkel, who is an energetic and enterprising reporter, than with the impenetrability of those disguises and the paradoxical, quicksilver quality of Ross's gift. What appeared stubborn or willful at one moment could seem brilliant the next, and Ross liked nothing more than to keep you guessing. "You caught only glimpses of Ross, even if you spent a long evening with him," Thurber wrote. "He was always in mid-flight, or on the edge of his chair, alighting or about to take off."

HAROLD WALLACE ROSS was born in Aspen, Colorado, on November 6, 1892. His father, George, was a silver miner who had emigrated from Ulster. His mother, Ida, was a Massachusetts-born schoolmistress, and she was a stickler for correctness of every sort. When George proposed—by postcard, and with a signature that was barely legible—she offered to send him some writing paper so he could conduct a proper courtship. It was Ida who was responsible both for what came to be called Ross's "puritanism"—his uneasiness about sex—and for his lifelong fascination with grammar and his habit of reading dictionaries and Fowler's "Modern English Usage" for pleasure.

The silver market collapsed the year after Ross was born, and in 1901 the family moved to Salt Lake City, where George had started a wrecking company. (Ross claimed later that a stagecoach accident while he was on the way to Utah was what had caused his hair to stand straight up for the rest of his life, but photographic evidence suggests that, until Jane Grant talked him into combing it back, he may have used artificial goops and stiffeners as well.) According to Grant, Ross's childhood was a more or less happy one, but Kunkel has discovered that in 1907, when Ross was just fourteen, he was living by himself in a Salt Lake City boarding house, and though he later moved back home, he ran away several times. In the classic pattern of so many bright, rootless American boys—the young Ben Franklin, for example, and the young Samuel Clemens—Ross hated school but at an early age fell under the spell of newspapering. He dropped out of high school in 1906, at the end of his sophomore year, and became an apprentice reporter, first at the Salt Lake *Telegram & Tribune* and then as part of the fraternity of hobo newspapermen who roved the country in the early part of this century, working a week here, a month there. Ross's wanderings took him west to California, east to Brooklyn and Hoboken, and south to New Orleans and Panama. "Between the time he left Salt Lake and the spring of 1917, when he enlisted in the army," Kunkel writes, "Ross the tramp reporter worked at so many newspapers—about two dozen—and usually for such short durations that before long he himself couldn't reconstruct the bewildering itinerary precisely. Not entirely in jest he would say later, 'If I stayed anywhere more than two weeks, I thought I was in a rut.' "

Kunkel's discussion of this period of Ross's life is absorbing and surprising. The first editor of *The New Yorker*, it turns out, was a man who had one foot in the twentieth century and one foot in the world of Mark Twain or Bret Harte. Tall and gangly, in an ill-fitting suit and yellow high-button shoes, the Ross of these years—Hobo Ross or Hangover Ross, as he was known then—is like a character straight out of "The Luck of Roaring Camp." He drank, he swore, he played cards and dice, and he perfected a parlor trick of drawing a tenpenny nail through the gap between his two front teeth. He also filed hundreds and hundreds of stories, covering everything from steamboat launchings to murder trials, and he read the sorts of books that self-educated newspapermen read back then: Herbert Spencer, Jack London, Kipling, and Conrad. What Ross got, in effect, was an American education of the rough-and-ready, hard-knocks variety—the same kind of education that Howells and Crane had received earlier—and it served him better than many of his contemporaries could appreciate. Ross's schooling left some comical omissions—he was middle-aged, for example, before he discovered that "claret" could refer to wine as well as to the fluid that old-time boxing writers loved to see streaming from prizefighters' noses—but it provided him with an impeccable ear for phonyness or pretension of any sort and with an inexhaustible curiosity about how the world really worked. It's no accident that in July, 1925, when *The New Yorker* finally started to find its voice—after months of stumbling around, trying to be a society magazine and a humor magazine—it did so with a piece of reporting, an article that Ross had commissioned on the Scopes trial, which was then taking place in Dayton, Tennessee. The piece, by Marquis James, describes Dayton this way:

> This town differs from other east Tennessee towns because it is newer and more progressive. It was founded in the eighties when the railroad came through from Cincinnati. It belongs to the twentieth century. It ought to have a Rotary Club and Mr. Robinson, the hustling druggist, ought to be the president. Dayton took the county seat away from Washington, which is more than one hundred years old, but has no railroad, no hustling druggist and will never catch the eye of Rotary International. It is a restful Southern hamlet of character. You couldn't get up an evolution test case there on a bet.

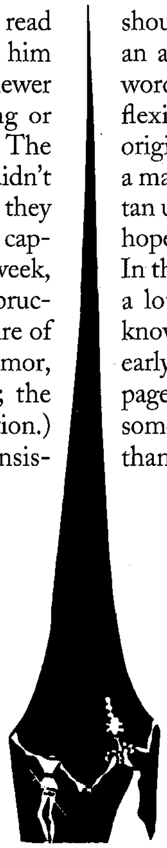
As Kunkel remarks, you don't have to listen very hard to hear in this an anticipation of Joseph Mitchell or A. J. Liebling; you can also hear, between the lines, the distinctive Colorado twang of Hobo Ross. The first key to his eventual success as a magazine editor was that he never stopped being a newspaperman.

WHAT most accounts of Ross's provincialism fail to mention is that a certain anti-intellectualism was something that many people of his generation worked hard to cultivate. Liebling's scorn for "the quarterly boys"; the Mitchell and John McNulty veneration of barrooms; the aggressively lowbrow reviews by Wolcott Gibbs—in those days, the anxious wish of the nerdish scribe to seem like a man of the world often took the form of a studied amateurishness. Ross played up to this view as much as anyone else, but he didn't have to pretend. He *was* a man of the world—far more sophisticated and experienced, in many ways, than the people who made fun of him, and certainly more than most of the people who worked for him. By the time he founded *The New Yorker*, Ross, then in his early thirties, had been to war (he edited the *Stars and Stripes*), had been the editor of three other national magazines (*Judge*, *The Home Sector*, and *American Legion Weekly*), and had become a part of New York's wealthy smart set. He went to croquet matches at the Swopeses', played softball with Billy Rose and Harpo Marx, went duck-shooting with Bernard Baruch, and played high-stakes poker with anyone rich (or foolhardy) enough to afford it.

Ross also had a shrewd publishing sense. He saw, almost from the moment that he landed in New York after the war, that there was room for a new kind of funny, sophisticated metropolitan weekly. The country's two big weekly humor magazines—*Judge* and the original *Life*—had become feeble and sophomoric; and the other weeklies, such as *Collier's*, *Liberty*, and the *Saturday Evening Post*, were national magazines, unsuited in some ways to upscale advertising, and they were relentlessly middlebrow. The chic highbrow magazines, on the other hand—*Vanity Fair* and *The American Mercury*—came out monthly and had begun to seem slick and predictable. As Kunkel observes, Ross felt that no single magazine spoke directly to him or to his generation, and he was convinced that a magazine that did would inevitably find a receptive audience.

Ross himself was the first to admit that he got the look of this new magazine right long before he succeeded with the content. He didn't have an "eye," in the traditional, art director's sense (one of his colleagues later complained, "Ross never understood pictures"), but he knew what he wanted, and he pored over copies of *Simplicissimus* and *Punch*, among other publications, for ideas about layout. "During the months—almost years—while *The New Yorker* was being evolved," Jane Grant wrote later, "our reading was pretty much restricted to books on printing, typography, and other subjects related to magazines." What Ross wanted—and what he urged Rea Irvin, the first art director of *The New Yorker*, to give him—was a look that was lively and nervy and original, and would consciously work against the tradition of classic, elegant magazine design embodied in those days in Frank Crowninshield's *Vanity Fair*, with its crisp, stately layouts and stylish black-and-white photography. Irvin, famously, responded by creating a new typeface for the magazine, designing the various departmental logos, and, of course, sending the top-hatted Eustace Tilley out onto the newsstands for the first of his sixty-nine (so far) February outings. But the name of the person responsible for the early rambunctious, offbeat layouts of *The New Yorker* has somehow gone unrecorded. He drifted away, probably, as people regularly did in those days, when paychecks turned up with extreme infrequency. Or perhaps he just quit, unable to tolerate the agonies of the Tuesday-afternoon Art Meeting, a weekly ritual, sometimes lasting until early in the evening, that was attended by Ross, Irvin, a select group of editors, and the "art boy"—Philip Wylie in the early days, and then, briefly, Truman Capote. (When Ross first laid eyes on Capote, he said to Janet Flanner, "What is *that*?" and then quickly added, "If you know, don't tell me.") The art boy would prop potential covers and cartoons on an easel, one by one, and then Ross would lean forward, the fingers of his left hand splayed against his chest, his right hand wielding a white knitting needle that served as a pointer, and subject the artwork to an intense scrutiny, until he had exposed all the faults and inaccuracies lurking there. "Miss Terry, take this down," he'd say to Daise Terry, the office manager, and he'd proceed to list the shortcomings he had found: doors that opened the wrong way, coats that buttoned on the wrong side, brownstone steps that were too close to the curb, road dust that looked insufficiently dustlike.

This literalism when it came to art, and especially to comic art, was the other side of Ross's daring: it stemmed from insecurity—from a suspicion that artists, if unchecked, would try to get away with anything—but also from a conviction that his audience ought to be able to "read" a piece of art as easily as it read a piece of writing. What drove him crazy was drawings that left the viewer uncertain about who was talking or what was going on and where. The early issues of *The New Yorker* didn't include many "idea drawings," as they came to be called—drawings with captions. There were one or two a week, most of them anemic stabs at sprucing up the old *Judge* and *Life* genre of illustrated two-line gags. (The humor, such as it was, was in the text; the drawing was essentially a decoration.) But Ross's fastidiousness, his insistence that *New Yorker* art depict real people in recognizable situations, eventually led to something brand-new: comic art in which the artwork was intrinsic to the joke, and not just an illustration. Ross never liked the term, but, in effect, he invented the cartoon.



A LOT of genius is luck, and Ross was lucky in the extreme. ("I was the luckiest son of a bitch alive," he wrote to George Jean Nathan, recalling the magazine's precarious early days.) He was lucky in his timing—arriving in New York just when the pent-up energy of the war years was about to uncork itself—and he was lucky in the people whom he very quickly attracted around him: first, Rea Irvin (whose contribution to the early *New Yorker* is impossible to overestimate) and then, in short order, Katharine Angell (who became Katharine White), E. B. White, Thurber, Wolcott Gibbs, Peter Arno, Dorothy Parker, Robert Benchley, St. Clair McKelway, and the rest. Or perhaps it was they who were lucky to find him. These early contributors all had talent to burn, and, maybe because of that, their personal lives seemed, in many cases, to be in flames. Illness (or hypochondria), indebtedness, love trouble, alcoholism, mental instability—the list of woes besetting Ross's staff was so long and comprehensive that he joked about hiring a staff psychiatrist, just as he had once briefly opened a staff speakeasy. Actually, *The New Yorker* had something better than a psychiatrist: it had Ross, whose odd and unlikely character became the one fixed point in so many otherwise sad and self-destructive lives.

Ross was rigid—even stuffy—in some respects (he believed that men should never attend matinées, and that an article should never start with the word "it," "and," or "but"), but he was flexible in many others. When the original formula for *The New Yorker*—a magazine for and about the Manhattan upper crust—didn't pan out as he'd hoped, he modified and expanded it. In the beginning, at least, he published a lot of junk, not because he didn't know it was junk but because in those early, ad-scarce days he had to fill the pages with *something*, and he knew that some kinds of filler were more useful than others. The piece that first put *The New Yorker* on the map was one that Ross didn't particularly care for: called "Why We Go to Cabarets: A Post-Debutante Explains," it was sort of the "Bright Lights, Big City" of its time—an attack on *Social Register* old-fartism and a celebration of the liberating energy of night-club life. Ross tried to fix up the writing, which he considered snotty, but when the author, a prominent

BOHEMIA

Authors and actors and artists and such
Never know nothing, and never know much.
Sculptors and singers and those of their kidney
Tell their affairs from Seattle to Sydney.
Playwrights and poets and such horses' necks
Start off from anywhere, end up at sex.
Diarists, critics, and similar roe
Never say nothing, and never say no.
People Who Do Things exceed my endurance;
God, for a man who solicits insurance!

—Dorothy Parker
(September 17, 1927)

young socialite named Ellin Mackay (who later married Irving Berlin), rejected his editing he went ahead and published the article anyway, in the issue of November 28, 1925. It made front-page news in the *Times* and the *Trib*, and for the first time ever *The New Yorker* sold out on the newsstand.

Ross never got over the panicky feeling of not having enough good copy to publish, and right to the end he was stockpiling ideas, just as in the early days he stockpiled staff members. Unnecessarily, as it turned out, for his greatest piece of luck proved to be an ability to get from writers more and better work than they knew they were capable of. Shawn wrote, "He gradually learned that the primary function of the magazine's editors, including him, was to create a structure and an atmosphere—a little world apart from the world—within which the writers and artists could fulfill themselves. . . . By being hospitable to the best, and expecting the best, he often received the best."

The big wheels in the magazine world these days tend to be either hedgehogs or foxes, to use Isaiah Berlin's famous distinction: the high-concept types, who have lunch, hatch schemes, and leave the actual editing to the drones; and the nitpickers, a vanishing species, who obsess over the details in the firm belief that if you get the small stuff right the big picture will take care of itself. Ross was both. He fussed over your punctuation, but he also brooded about your career—about what you should be writing and how you should be doing it. "I don't want to know what *you* think about what goes on in Paris," he told Janet Flanner. "I want to know what the French think." Years later, when Liebling was going off to cover the Second World War, Ross told him much the same thing: he wanted the story behind the story, the story from the point of view of the people who were living it. This apparently simple advice proved to be so high-concept that it transformed American journalism. Ross seldom knew beforehand what he wanted in a piece; what he wanted was what he himself would find interesting, and if it was good enough for him it was good enough for his readers. This trait, more than any other, distinguished him from contemporaries like George Horace Lorimer, of the *Saturday Evening Post*. Lorimer was not his readers: the readers were people he bought stuff *for*. Ross bought stuff for himself, and, luckily, he was interested in just about everything.

There are also two schools of editorial thought when it comes to the nurturing and managing of talent: that writers are fragile creatures, who have to be cosseted, and that they are monstrous egotists, who have to be prodded—bullied, if necessary—out of their self-involvement. Ross subscribed to both of these theories, too. He had a reverence bordering on awe for creative people of any sort, and a dim view of their practicality. ("He thought that people with talent didn't in general know enough to come in out of the rain," William Maxwell once said.) At the same time, he hated artiness, and never let any of his writers forget that it was just a magazine they were working on. Even if he liked something you had written, his praise was often tempered with fond disparagement, and sometimes it was delivered in the men's room.

Ross did a certain amount of editing just by being around—by being Ross. He loved to patrol the writers' floor, listening hopefully for the sound of typing ("Will someone please strike a key, goddammit!" he shouted once when the hallway was too quiet for his liking), and sticking his head into writers' offices. A joke or a complaint or a piece of gossip, and then a booming "God bless," a wave of his enormous hand, and he was off. To a degree that never failed to astonish new employees, Ross was anxious about the quality of what he printed, and was always in search of advice and reassurance. Ideas poured out of him, and he discussed them with anybody he happened to run into: not just the senior sachems but the secretaries, the office boys, and the elevator operators.

Ross did most of his text-editing by letter or memo—hectoring, wheedling, scolding, cajoling—and by means of his famous Ross notes. These lists of editorial points and suggestions, which he used to bang out on his Underwood typewriter, with a Parliament stuck to his pendulous lower lip or smoldering in the ashtray beside him, often ran to pages, and they are sometimes cited as evidence of Ross's intellectual limitations: "Ariel—who he?" and "Is Moby Dick the man or the whale?" and (next to an S. J. Perelman joke about "the woman taken in adultery") "What woman?" But if you study the Ross notes what they reveal is a man who was well informed about a wide range of topics—sports, geography, business, low life, high society—and brought all that knowledge to bear on a page of copy in an obsessive quest for precision and completeness.

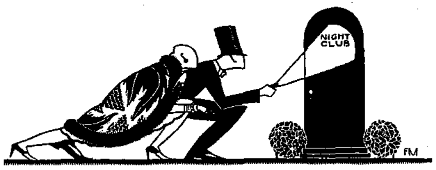
What Ross was really interested in was clarity, and in order to obtain it he was not above resorting to the old newspaperman's wile of pretending to be a little dumber than he was. Ross the Rube was in large part a disguise created by Ross the Editor. It amused him (he was a legendary practical joker), and it also made his job easier. His endless lists of queries maddened some of his writers (Liebling, for one) but were welcomed by others (including such hard-to-please cases as Rebecca West and Mary

McCarthy), and they were tolerated by everyone—if only because they reduced the one-upmanship that so often infects editor-writer confrontations. Ross didn't care whether you thought his queries literal or inane; all he cared about was that the piece worked.

ONE of the few areas in which Ross wasn't lucky was women, and the problem was largely of his own making. Despite his Lincolnesque features and a lingering social unease, Ross was extremely attractive. One woman I know, who used to see him at parties in the thirties, says that he was "sexually magnetic—the most appealing man I ever laid eyes on." And Ross liked women, after a fashion: he married three times, dated showgirls and movie stars (including the young Ginger Rogers) when he was single, and had a lifelong fascination with prostitutes. Even for a man of his era, though, he clung obstinately to a double standard and suffered cruelly from inflexible ideas about sexuality and about women's roles. His second and third marriages—to Frances Elie (with whom he had a daughter, Patricia) and Ariane Allen—were unhappy; and, except for Katharine White, the brilliant and flinty Bryn Mawr graduate who became *The New Yorker's* first fiction editor, he never really got used to having women as colleagues. Kunkel says that in a way Mrs. White was the love of Ross's life, and suggests that part of the attraction for Ross was Katharine's resemblance to his mother: they were both opinionated, no-nonsense Massachusetts Yankees who were unafraid of his temper. But it's possible that Kunkel has mistaken for romantic love what was in fact something more like awe. Ross was *scared* of Katharine White. Everybody was.

The combination of braininess and sexiness appealed to Ross, though. He tended to go out with airheads, but he was nevertheless drawn to bright, attractive women who in some ways were ahead of their time and certainly of his. Sifting through the various Ross accounts, you can't help being charmed by the alluring, gaminelike, and slightly bossy figure of Jane Grant, and wishing that they'd stayed together. If Ross was a character out of Bret Harte, she was one out of Dreiser. She grew up in Kansas, in a strict Baptist family, but became stagestruck at an early age, and when she was sixteen she moved to New York, determined to become a singer. She lived for a while in a theatrical boarding house, and eventually, to help pay for an apartment, took a clerical job with the society department of the *Times*. There she came under the wing of Alexander Woollcott, soon to be the paper's chief theatre critic. Woollcott championed her writing career (in time, she was assigned to the city desk and became its first full-time female reporter), squired her around town, and, in Paris in 1918, brought her to a poker game where she met Ross. After she and Ross were married, two years later, Woollcott moved in with them. At 412 West Forty-seventh Street (*way* west, between Ninth and Tenth Avenues), the three shared a pair of brownstones (with the connecting wall knocked down) with Hawley Truax, who became *The New Yorker's* treasurer, and assorted tenants. The place was part fraternity house and part an early and disastrous experiment in communal living. It was the kind of place where Gershwin might drop by in the evening to try out his latest version of "Rhapsody in Blue," and where the next night thirty people would show up unexpectedly for dinner. Grant was almost hyperenergetic during this period—chasing down stories, dashing off to parties and dinners, and sometimes returning to the *Times* late at night to finish her copy. At 412, she was the housemother, the banker, and the nurturer of Ross's dreams and ambitions. It was Jane who put Ross up to asking Raoul Fleischmann, the yeast-fortune heir, for help in starting a magazine. And it was Jane who provided the infant *New Yorker* with one of its key contributors by suggesting that Janet Flanner, an old reporter friend of hers then living in France, try her hand at writing a fortnightly letter from Paris. Ross didn't care for her first two efforts, but he combined them into a single article, and to perk the column up he eventually added the byline "Genêt" (very likely his notion of how "Janet" was pronounced in French).

When the Ross marriage broke up, in 1929, Jane (who later founded White Flower Farm, the innovative nursery, with her second husband) said that she was worn out by the strain of living without privacy. Ross, for his part, said that the problem was Grant's proto-feminism. "The reason I left Jane Grant, or whatever it was, was that I never had one damned meal at home at which the discussion wasn't of women's rights and the ruthlessness of men in trampling women," he said. "You go through several years of that and you can't take it anymore."

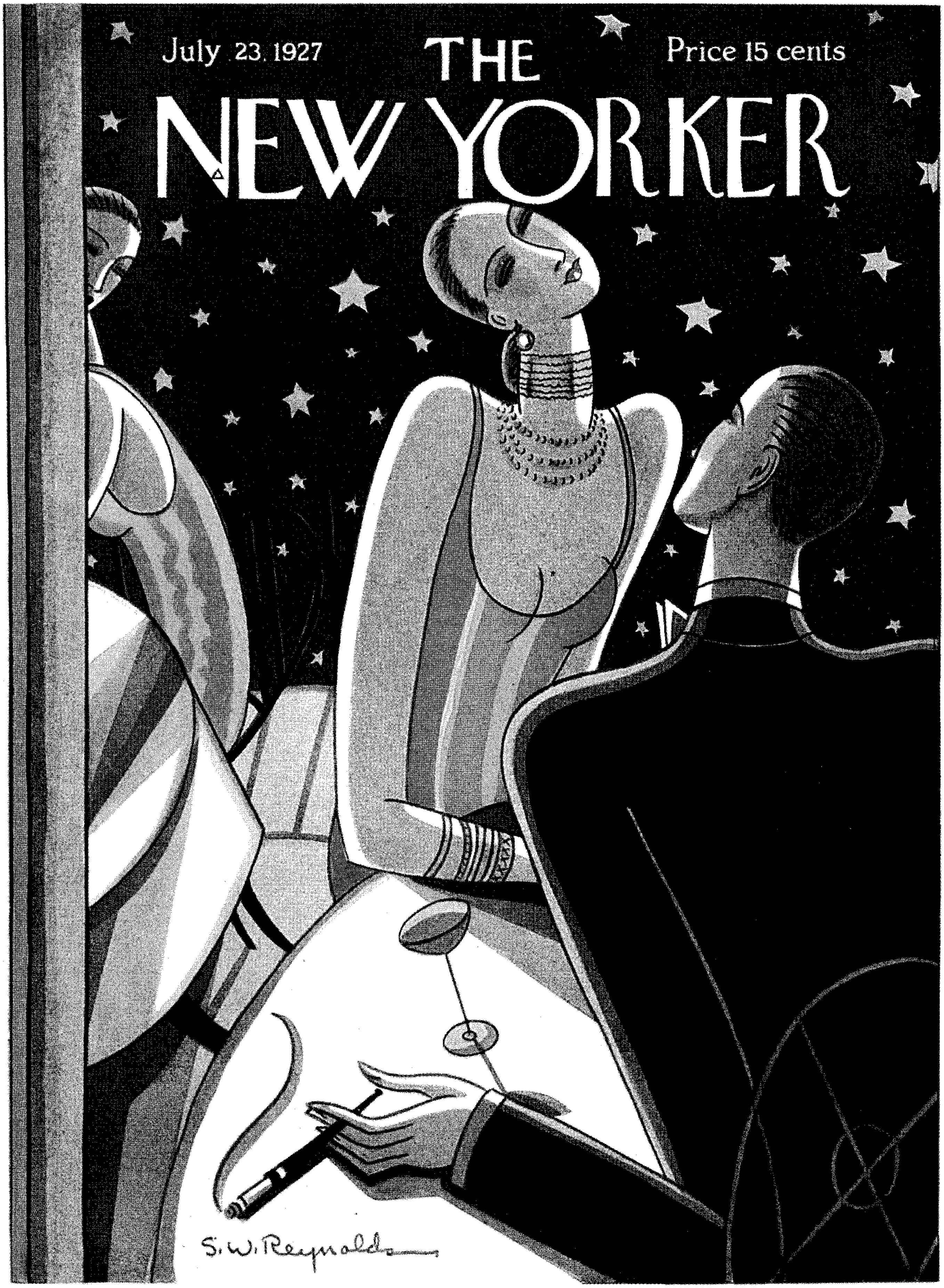


ROSS never tired of pointing out that *The New Yorker* wasn't his only good publishing idea; there were lots of others where *that* came from. He kept schemes in his head for a tabloid, for a paper about shipping, for publishing books in paperback, and—closest to his heart—for a true-crime magazine. The title he had in mind for this one was *Guilty*. Even when *The New Yorker* had become, in effect, a literary magazine, Ross never thought of himself as a literary fellow; he preferred to see himself as a doer, a man who knew how to accomplish things. Or, more precisely, a man who might know how to accomplish things if he hadn't had the misfortune to surround himself with people who didn't. This persona of the beleaguered man of practicality, coping with folly, incompetence, and disappointment, is one that appears in Ross's letters right from the beginning and helps make them the funny, riveting documents they are.

Thurber maintained that Ross was a terrible writer, but you'd never know it from Ross's correspondence. The letters are brisk, sharp, and disarming, and they're written in the highly polished regular-guy vernacular that transformed American prose in the first half of this century. (Ross claimed never to have read Hemingway; he once started "A Farewell to Arms," he said, but he couldn't believe a war story where the characters spent all their time in bed together. There are moments, though, when his letters have a Hemingway-like cadence and understatement.) Some of the letters are also what Ross might have called "casuals" in miniature: little comic essays on the frustrations of office life.

Ross was a romantic about people—he was willing to give virtually anyone a chance, and his expectations were so

SIXTY-EIGHT YEARS AGO IN THE NEW YORKER


July 23, 1927
THE NEW YORKER
Price 15 cents
S. W. Reynolds

high that he was almost invariably disappointed—and he was a romantic about systems. He had a nineteenth-century faith in organization, and he dreamed, against all evidence to the contrary, of a mystical Central Desk that would take all the chaos and complications of 25 West Forty-third Street—the personnel, the contributors, the endless stream of proofs—and somehow transform them magically each week into a magazine. "Ross's mind," Thurber said, "was always filled with dreams of precision and efficiency beyond attainment." Ross devised dozens of forms and procedures; he laid down rules and then amended them beyond recognition; he created byzantine payment schemes, designed to reward brevity and productivity both; and he sent and received countless memos, which were copied in triplicate, sometimes in quadruplicate, on onionskin sheets. How they churned out the paperwork in those days, back before the electronic office! Your heart goes out to the legions of young women who, under the exacting Daise Terry, had to cope with all this stuff; at the end of the day, they must have been so tired that they could hardly wriggle their swollen fingers back into the white gloves that she insisted on.

The more Ross tried to systematize the office, of course, the more inefficient it became, and it was this paradox that sent him on his famous, decade-long quest for a "Jesus"—an administrative genius who could bring order out of confusion. So many people held this thankless post—some, like James M. Cain, for only a few months—that other staffers used to joke about the "Jesus parade." Ross would build up impossibly high expectations for the latest incumbent and then turn on him when it became clear that the poor soul could not live up to them. The procession ended only in 1939, with the promotion of William Shawn, originally a writer for the Talk of the Town, in whom Ross found less a Jesus, perhaps, than a Moses—someone who could codify and expand his vision, and translate it for succeeding generations.

What can the relationship between Ross and Shawn have been like? It's difficult to imagine two more dissimilar people: the one big, loud, vulgar, and gregarious; the other tiny, quiet, fastidiously polite, and almost pathologically shy. Shawn, in an afterword he wrote for Gill's book, often defends Ross in ways that inevitably point to the differences between them: he says, for example, "Ross was no moral philosopher, and his social conscience was shaky, and he knew nothing whatever about politics, but he had a profound ethical sense when it came to journalism." Yet Shawn clearly saw in Ross a kindred spirit—someone who shared his profound dislike of falseness and glibness. And Ross, for his part, welcomed Shawn's overwhelming competence and the fact that, in an office that was becoming increasingly temperamental, he never needed maintenance or propping up; he simply got the job done. In later years, when Ross was uncertain about a piece or a proposal he would sometimes say to its writer, "Well, I guess I better see what the boys think." The boys were Shawn.

Ross may also have seen in Shawn someone who shared his ambivalent view of the business side of the magazine. By the time I joined *The New Yorker*, in the early seventies, it was received dogma that relations between the editorial and the publishing departments of *The New Yorker* had reached such a carefully adjudicated state of amicable purity and understanding that it was, as Shawn liked to put it, "too complicated to talk about."

What Kunkel suggests is that this supposed state of harmony was probably just a sign of wariness and exhaustion on both sides. Practically from the moment Ross and Raoul Fleischmann first became partners, they failed to get along. In the beginning, at least, Ross was overcome by guilt; Fleischmann had been lured into backing *The New Yorker* on the understanding that his total investment would be twenty-five thousand dollars, but over the next three years he wound up pouring seven hundred thousand more—most of what he was worth—into the struggling magazine. Once *The New Yorker* became profitable, things only got worse, for Ross became convinced that Fleischmann and his "stooges," his "ring of stupid fumblers," were taking more than their fair share of the proceeds. Ross's suspicions weren't entirely groundless. In the mid-thirties, he discovered that Fleischmann—and *The New Yorker*—was secretly underwriting *Stage*, a glossy theatre magazine. Ross's resentment, Fleischmann later admitted, was "boundless." Ross sold most of his own *New Yorker* stock—to Time, Inc., of all places—and later threatened to resign if the contributions to *Stage* didn't stop. Fleischmann backed down, as he did again a few years later, when Ross took part in what amounted to a stockholders' revolt, accusing the *New Yorker* management of malfeasance. Ironically, as Kunkel points out, all the bad feeling actually served to strengthen the magazine's editorial independence. Had Fleischmann felt welcome on the editorial floors, he might have been tempted to interfere; and Ross's eventual disgust with the business side freed him to do what he did best—to edit.

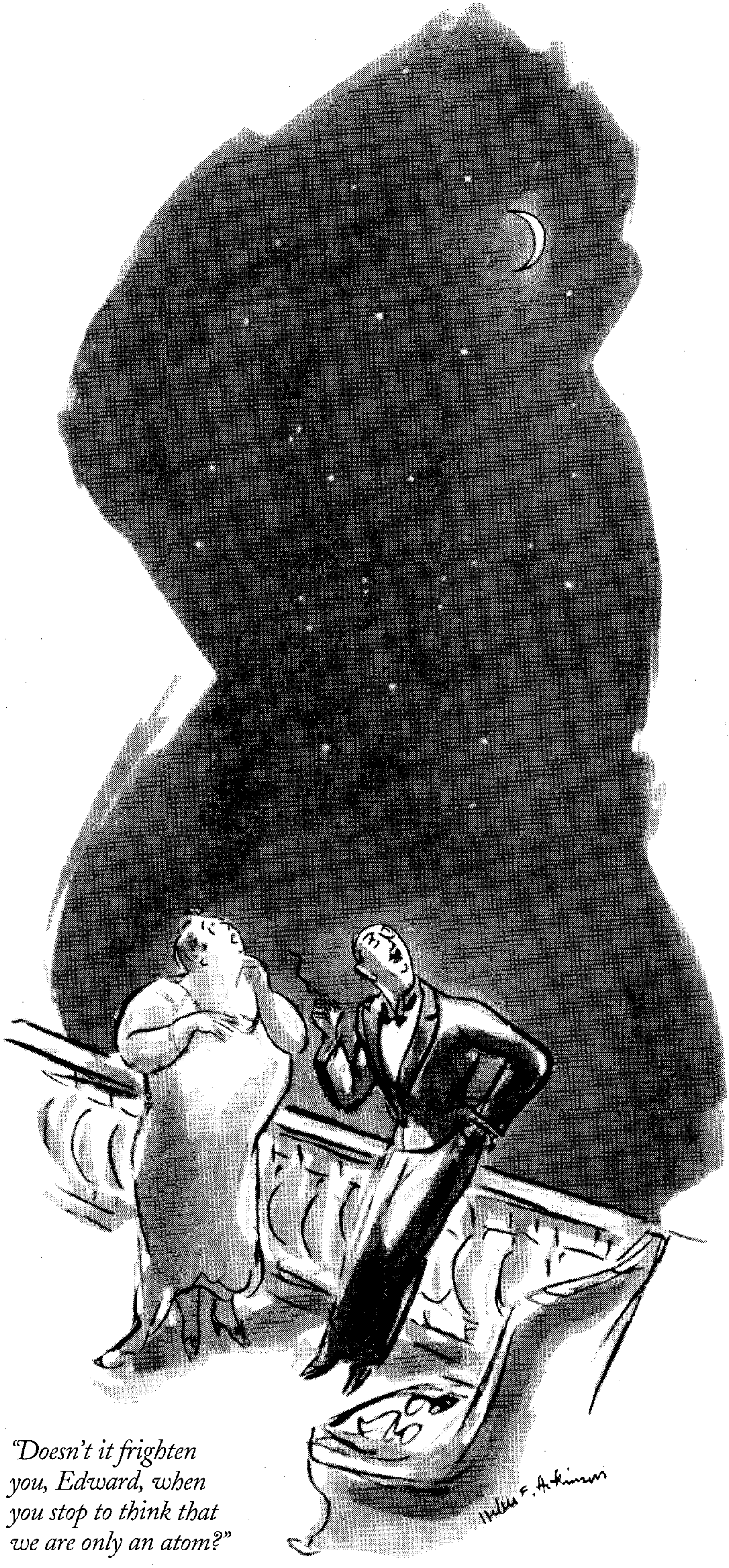
TWO themes recur in all the accounts of the early days at *The New Yorker:* how hard it was to put out the magazine, and how much fun it was. The two were not unrelated: some of the fun, surely, came from succeeding at something that was almost impossibly difficult—publishing every week a magazine that was smart, stylish, truthful, informative, and entertaining. But a lot of the fun came from Ross himself and from the staff he assembled around him. Ross was not in fact good at spotting talent right off. He made many more hiring mistakes—people who then had to be fired by one of his minions, since Ross could never bring himself to do the job in person—than real discoveries. But, once he knew the people he could count on, he had a knack for keeping them—well, not happy, exactly, but constantly reassured and constantly energized. If you were lucky enough to work for him, it was like having a particularly charming but slightly crazy older brother, who took his fraternal responsibilities to unheard-of lengths. He would tease you, flatter you, play tricks on you, worry about your finances and your love affairs; sometimes he'd make you weep with gratitude, sometimes with frustration. When you went home at night, Ross was what you talked about, and all too often he was what you dreamed about, too.

For Ross, the Second World War was a major turning point. In a way, the war was the making of *The New Yorker*. The circulation jumped dramatically, and *The New Yorker* became a truly national publication, not just a chic comic weekly for East Coast sophisticates. The dispatches sent from overseas by reporters like Liebling, E. J. Kahn, Philip Hamburger, Mollie Panter-Downes, Flanner, and many others gave the magazine a new breadth and depth and seriousness. But all this came at a heavy cost on the fun side. With most of the editors off in the Army, Ross and Shawn had to get out the magazine virtually by themselves, and the work was so hard that Ross even flirted with the idea of going biweekly. "The magazine is running us; we aren't running it," he said at one point.

Even when the war ended and everyone came home, nothing was quite the same. The magazine had become big and complicated, and Ross, instead of being the older brother, now found himself the father figure to a bunch of cranky middle-aged children. White was talking about moving back to Maine for good. Thurber was increasingly moody, and was drinking too much. Some of the newly returned editors were grousing that Shawn had used their absence as an occasion for self-advancement. Ross, too, began to complain, and to talk wistfully about the old true-crime mag.

Reading Kunkel's account, and Ross's own letters from this period, you sense that Ross suffered a good deal from the sadness that so often attends success in America. He had built an enormously successful enterprise, and now he was trapped by it. Like many geniuses, Ross wound up alone at the end—in his case, perhaps, because he had been taken over by his own persona, the put-upon, curmudgeonly Editor. Ross died, during an operation for lung cancer, at the New England Baptist Hospital, in Boston, on December 6, 1951. For over a year, he had been separated from his third wife, Ariane, and had been living by himself in Room 806 at the Algonquin, dining, as often as not, on sardines right from the can. The last words he spoke to anyone from "the old gang" were to George S. Kaufman, a poker-playing pal, and what he said was phrased in jokey, old-fashioned newspaper-speak: "I'm up here to end this thing, and it may end me, too. But that's better than going on this way. God bless you. I'm half under the anesthetic now."

ONE more photograph of Ross. This is a snapshot taken by Lillian Ross (no relation), probably in the summer of 1950. Ross, looking thin and tired, is standing on what is unmistak-



"Doesn't it frighten you, Edward, when you stop to think that we are only an atom?"

FROM THE NEW YORKER, JULY 12, 1930.

ably the terrace outside the editor's suite at 25 West Forty-third. Either it was very windy on the day that Lillian Ross took her picture or else the cleaner must have ironed Ross's trousers sideways. They're flattened, creaseless, against his legs in the stovepipe fashion of children's drawings. Ross's jacket doesn't look quite right, either: it's wrinkled and seems bigger in one shoulder than in the other. "The trouble with that photograph may lie with the subject," Ross wrote to the taker of the picture. "One in my calling should, of course, look hard-pressed, harassed, and careless, but not that disorderly. I'll get my suits pressed up. The basic trouble is, though, that I'm sort of warped."

In a way, Ross *was* warped. Though he clearly overcame the limitations of his background, and even turned them to his advantage, he showed for all his life the strain of having to adapt a nineteenth-century upbringing to a world where high-top shoes were not quite the thing anymore, where the telephone rang all the time, and where women were everywhere and felt free to lecture you about your shortcomings. You could see it in his body language; he was always fidgeting, Jane Grant said, as if he suffered perpetual growing pains. He was probably misshapen, too, from the burden of having to be so many things to so many different people: friend, nursemaid, mentor, paymaster, morale-booster, and sometimes rejecter and door-shutter. But the strain that took the greatest toll was just having to assume responsibility for what he had created. Against all odds, Ross had succeeded in putting together a magazine that was everything he had dreamed it would be, and now it was up to him to get out next week's issue, and the one after that, goddammit, and the one after that . . .

Ross was something new in American publishing—an editor who edited not just with a pencil, or with "sensibility," but with the force of personality. And the strange and exacting demands of this new profession may account for the wariness in his expression as he stands there on that windswept terrace. He seems drained, used up. If you didn't know better, you'd never guess that this was one of the great figures of magazine history. You'd think he was just another guy from out of town, alone in the big city. ♦

THE LETTERS OF HAROLD ROSS

A HELL OF AN ARGUMENT

A lifelong flow of memos and missives kept Ross in touch with his friends and harried writers—and with the editor himself.

Harold Ross, who never wrote a word (at least under his own name) in *The New Yorker*, may well have been the most prolific writer on the premises during the seventy years that the magazine has been publishing. Virtually every day between the magazine's birth, in 1925, until his death, in 1951, Ross devoted several hours to writing letters and memos. The correspondence reveals Ross's expansive intellect and wit, and demolishes the nagging myth that he was a clumsy rube whose magazine somehow succeeded in spite of him.

Much of Ross's writing, to be sure, was everyday stuff, of the pre-fax era—letters to incite and irritate and motivate and argue with his far-flung and close-at-hand contributors, and letters to keep him in touch with his endless list of friends. Yet letter writing came naturally to a man with such a compulsive nature and passion for language. The written word mattered to Ross. From his earliest years, in turn-of-the-century Colorado and Utah, Ross's schoolteacher mother had her son parse sentences until their underlying structure and quirky predilections became second nature to him. Once, when he was editing the *Stars and Stripes*, during the First World War, Ross gave a colleague a page of commas for Christmas.

This sampler, edited by Ross's biographer Thomas Kunkel, was culled from the thousands of Ross letters that have survived.

In 1926, The New Yorker was a year old and was still so pinched for cash that Ross was not above hoodwinking even close friends, like the sometime contributor Alexander Woollcott. Ralph Ingersoll was the infant magazine's managing editor.

Memo to Ralph Ingersoll

[1926]

INGERSOLL:

On the rate. Try this—pay him for one of the pieces, the longer one. If he complains tell him bookkeeping error, other not paid for yet. He will get over the fifteen cent [per word] idea soon. I will get him over it if necessary. You have got to take the brunt on Wooll. Alibi vaguely, or what you think of. He will write more. . . .

R.

To F. Scott Fitzgerald

April 26, 1929

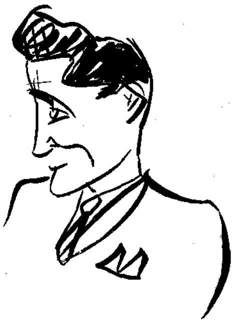
DEAR FITZGERALD:

We got a piece of yours through your agent, Mr. Reynolds, a very good piece for us. This makes us happy.

I wish to God you would write other things for us. You wouldn't get rich doing it, but it ought to give you satisfaction.

Sincerely yours,

H. W. ROSS



F. Scott Fitzgerald

To Frank Crowninshield, the editor of *Vanity Fair*

April 20, 1933

DEAR FRANK:

The use of daring words is one of our most serious problems, or at any rate, one of my most serious concerns. I, too, suspect frequently that I am a generation behind. Much of my activity the last couple of years has been fighting the use of words which I think are shocking in print. . . .

A magazine is certainly something for circulation in mixed company and I always keep in mind *The New Yorker* will be left around the house where it is available to women and children. That is a practical consideration and, it seems

ILLUSTRATIONS BY TOM BACHTELL

to me, a very important one. The hell of it is that in these days of frankness and disillusionment, when fathers insist that they want their daughters to have "experience before marriage" and when Vassar graduates turn up with a vocabulary which you haven't heard since the old days in Fanny Brown's hook shop in California, I don't know how to gauge the standards of mixed company. I frankly suspect, however, that the present vocabulary is superficial socially, temporary and fadistic, and that the conservatives are in the majority. Every once in a while I get out into non-writing and non-modern circles which I find conservatively "decent." They are dull but homelike. . . .

I could discuss this subject further but I won't. We are both in the same situation, although I have been beaten down further than you have, I think.

Yours sincerely,
H. W. Ross

To Frank Sullivan
Wednesday [circa 1940]

Frank:

Let me know about the ending—whether it was fucked up or not, and while I'm at it, I wish you and O'Hara and a few other hardy boys would stop writing *fuck*, *shit*, etc. in letters to this office, because they have to be handled by pure young girls and I don't want to embarrass them, whatever the new attitude is toward such things. I'm a simple old double-standard boy. . . .

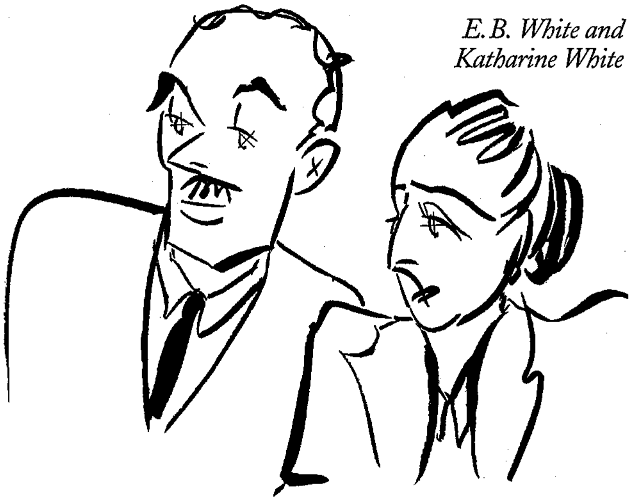
As ever,
R

In the summer of 1940, The New Yorker published a withering six-part Profile of the gossip columnist Walter Winchell, written by St. Clair McKelway. The Stork Club was Winchell's base, and he generally had his way there.

Memo to *The New Yorker* staff
September 6, 1940

In the interests of avoiding possible embarrassment, I would report that I was kicked out of the Stork Club last night, or asked not to come in again (suavely), because the sight of me causes distress to Mr. [Sherman] Billingsley, the proprietor—something I'm doing my best to take in my stride. It's because of the Winchell pieces. I don't know to what extent Mr. Billingsley's aversion extends into this organization, but it certainly includes McKelway.

H. W. Ross



E. B. White and Katharine White

To Frank Sullivan
(in Saratoga)
July 12th [circa 1941]

Dear Frank, old fellow:

I don't know who that drunk was that showed up at your place, but there is no doubt that he is an old pal of mine. All bothersome, noisy drunks that show up anywhere—in elevators, in restaurants, in men's rooms, at Mrs. Harrison Williams's—are always old pals of mine, without exception. It has been that way all my life. It is my fate. It is something I did when I was young.

I may roll up to your place in the next few weeks, as my daughter is again at Cooperstown and will take me into those parts, but I will be erect, firm, dignified, and in complete control of myself, and my breath will be that of a Jersey cow's, a zephyr from the gardens where green vegetables grow, with a slight flavor of Amphojel blended with Creamalin. I called you at the Cornell Club one evening a couple of weeks ago. You had gone.

I cannot refrain from urging you to write a piece. If you don't do one, you are a little bastard. GOD DAMN IT!

Ross

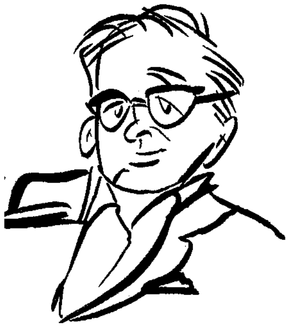
Ross was thrilled and relieved when E. B. White rejected DeWitt Wallace's lucrative offer to write a column for the Reader's Digest, a publication that Ross deplored.

To E. B. White
May 7th [1943]

White:

After a brief spell of breathlessness, I had several loud chuckles over your defiance of Wallace, and I continue to have them. I am carrying your note around with me and referring to it whenever life seems grim. My admiration for your boldness is unbounded. You have defied the biggest giant in the business and, by God, it's the first time I ever heard of anyone turning down his big dough. Whatever Wallace may think of your merits and your wordage, he cannot exceed me in the former, and as for the latter, I have never seen you use an unnecessary word. I am willing to take an oath to this effect. . . . You are a man who should not be digested; hydrochloric acid should never be applied. . . .

Ross



Frank Sullivan

After Ross fell behind in payments to his first wife, Jane Grant, he skirmished with her attorneys in a vigorous and, at times, sardonic correspondence.

To Chadbourne, Wallace, Parke & Whiteside
September 17, 1943

Gentlemen:

Good news! Please read the attached, pertaining to the matter you inquired about in your favor of recent date. I'll be remitting some cash if this check comes through, although I won't get the full amount of the check (due to other legal and bureaucratic complications that I won't burden you with here), and there are others in line also, among them an attorney or two. There is always an attorney or two in my line. I was going to try to have you all in for cocktails, but I don't think there will be enough left over. . . .

Long life to the legal profession! In just about ten years you boys will have this country so thoroughly tied up that it can't turn a wheel, and then everybody will just go gracefully out of business.

Very truly yours,
Ross, Ross, Ross, Ross & Ross
sgd/H. W. Ross
By H. W. Ross

To Samuel Hopkins Adams
June 14, 1945

Dear Sam:

[Edmund] Wilson is in Italy. I'll see that he gets your remarks sooner or later. I'll tell you now, though, that he isn't a man to let a definition in Webster's New International Dictionary stand between him and correct usage. He operates *behind* the dictionary and his remarks on the word "uninterested" were undoubtedly written in the knowledge that the dictionary, too, was wrong.

Wilson is like [Alexander] Woollcott in that he has his own firm opinions about the meanings of words, the use of punctuation marks, and many other things. I have learned this by experience with both of them. Woollcott was always lecturing me about points in English, pronunciations, and on the whole was, I am glad to say, enormously educational. He didn't know as much as he thought he did, though. I remember an awful stew once when we printed "none were," which he considered grotesquely improper. The idea that "none" means "no one" and is somehow a derivation or contraction of it (which it isn't) got loose in American newspaper offices somehow a few decades ago and Woollcott was among the millions who swallowed it. Also, he was violent once about "onto." I had to pull Fowler in both cases. Fowler is a useful stone to throw at anyone living in a glass house. . . .

Sincerely,
H. W. Ross

To H. L. Mencken
March 19, 1945

Dear Mencken:

I duly received the reprint on American profanity and have read it with interest and profit. Damn it—if you'll pardon me—I wish I could be sure that none of the stuff you have been doing for the forthcoming book would have made pieces for us. . . .

Writing of the Holy Name Society you say that "numbers of those who are enrolled have apparently got wind of the fact that *hell* and *damn*, if unaccompanied by sacred names, are not . . . blasphemous. . . ." That's correct. I've got wound stripes from my encounters with the Holy Name Society while engaged in getting out this home journal. The outfit as constituted locally—headed apparently by a monsignor, a police lieutenant, and a few other lay zealots—claims jurisdiction over all blasphemy, profanity, and all artificially opprobrious expressions. They regard *son of a bitch* and *bastard* as clearly within their sphere, and deplore *gosh* and all other euphemisms, I think. (I don't talk to them when the committee makes its periodical appearance in this office; we have a lad here who looks at them with a bleary eye and exudes a stale whiskey odor.) . . .

As ever,
H. W. Ross

To Mrs. Norton Baskin (Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings)
November 30, 1945

Dear Mrs. Baskin:

You are a little wrong in your idea of how we work here. I never actually decide on the details of a piece, or when I do it is extra routine business. I do what I call "query" things in a story, pass the queries on to [the fiction editor, Gustave S.] Lobrano, and then he and the author decide on the details. And actually what I and the rest of us do is query, too, for in the long run the story is the author's and is run over the author's signature, and if the author wants to retain some bad grammar or some ambiguity, or even print two or three words upside down, we let them do it if the story is good enough to get by with the defects, or what we consider the defects. We've got to accept or reject what the author wants in the long run, in toto. We do put up a hell of an argument about details sometimes, though, and occasionally we have to hand back a story we think we have bought because the author won't yield on points we consider important. (The worse the writer is, the more argument; that is the rule. There are a vast number of writers around who can't write. They get by through diligence, application, and various other qualities that are not primarily literary.) . . .

The only great argument I have against writers, generally speaking, is that many of them deny the function of an editor, and I claim editors are important. For one thing, an editor is a good trial horse; the writer can use him to see if a story and its various elements register as he or she thinks they register. . . . For another thing, editors perform a technical function in small matters that I suspect writers shouldn't concern themselves with overmuch. I think writers, or most writers, ought to let editors backstop the small, more or less technical points. The trouble with our querying system is that it sometimes makes writers self-conscious; they get to thinking—oh, Christ, three or four people are going to pick flaws in this—and they freeze up. . . . [M]ost of the writers think we are helpful at times, if a nuisance generally. We are unquestionably captious and careless frequently and occasionally we suggest changes for the mere sake of change, or for a peculiar personal feeling, but we try not to cram our theories, little or big, down writers' throats. . . .

Sincerely yours,
H. W. Ross

To Arthur Kober
The New Yorker
December 9, 1946

Dear Kober:

Several of you writers . . . have had passing reference to me as dynamic, boisterous, mad, violent, impatient and so on, when everyone whom I ever

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JANET FLANNER

From 1925 to 1975, Janet Flanner, whose Paris Letter conveyed the news and politics and art and esprit of France to New Yorker readers, wrote history as if it were a conversation sustained during a headlong taxi ride down the Champs-Élysées. She knew everyone, greeted each new passing mode or horrific turn of events (including the fall of France to the Nazis) with ardent curiosity, and wrote in a style at once dazzling and august. In time, she took on the presence and gaze of a Richelieu: a statesman of letters.

Photograph by Richard Avedon
New York City, March 19, 1954.

associated with knows that I am one of the longest-suffering and pleasantest and, at heart, quietest men alive today, a sort of gentile Christ. I had a straight flush the other night that gave me a momentary lift, but only momentary. . . .

As ever,
Ross

To Janet Flanner
March 18, 1947

Dear Janet:

The Art series ["The Beautiful Spoils," about the Nazi plunder of European art works] has now run. It has apparently created as much interest as anything since Pétain. Out in California (where I went—quickly—for my vacation) I found Albert Lasker, the advertising man, reading the series aloud to his wife and several others who made up an appreciative audience. Excellent reports all around, of course. It was another distinguished and monumental job. The second story was my favorite, Goering. That piece did more than anything I read during the war and since to show up what brigands the bastards were. Goering was just what Al Capone would have been in control of a continent. You will doubtless hear a lot about this series, even at your distance.

With admiration
and love,
Ross

To Rebecca West
August 12, 1947

Dear Rebecca:

God, I wish you would get a break and get to Palestine. That, next to Russia—everything journalistically is next to Russia, to my mind—is the most interesting spot there is now, from a news standpoint, and I have never seen anything other than an unsatisfactory fragment from there. And your conclusion that there is something behind it more sinister than meets the eye arouses my sense of news and mystery. . . .

Rebecca West

I earnestly hope that your jaw infection has disappeared by the time you get this. As for my mouth condition, the dentist has all my bridges for remodeling, and I won't get them until I get back. I've been going around looking, to use an old line of Alec Woollcott's, like an English theatrical company. My condition is not threatening world letters, or world journalism, as yours is, however.

As ever,
Ross

James Thurber

Memo to Katharine S. White
November 4, 1947

Mrs. White:

. . . I'd like to know which authors are saying it's too much trouble to fix their stuff to suit us. O'Hara doesn't count, although I don't know whether he has ever gone to the trouble of making such a remark as this. For years, I've been getting complaints about the obscurity of O'Hara's stories, and, if anything, it's he who is getting away with something, and not us. Nor do the vast number of semi-literates who write three-fourths of our stuff count—that [a fiction contributor], for instance. You don't know what she's talking about a third of the time, and that goes for a lot of others. Those people aren't writers. Their stuff has to be rendered into English and can't rise above the plane of straightaway English because that's as high as editing will raise it. But it ought to be edited to that plane.

H. W. R.

To James Thurber
September 15, 1948

Dear Jim:

I've got several points to raise on "Six for the Road" and after some mulling around have decided to put them up to you at this point, the principal reason being that I want to get them on paper while they are fresh and clear in my mind. . . .

1. Inasmuch as you have an introduction to the answer below, would it not be well to have one here, as marked. Or it might be just: "The Question:" Seems to me would be consistent, and also work for quick clarity.

1a. Suggest moving phrase marked from here, where not essential, down to 1b, where it seems to me it is essential, or anyhow more useful. It isn't a typical party you're talking about here—doesn't include the kind of mild parties you've enumerated in preceding paragraph, but a party typical of this particular circle, the Spencer-Thurber circle. Also, suggest that these people here be pegged as suburban, as I have marked, or some such, for later in the piece, much later, it turns out that they live in places with stairs, which means houses, not apartments. You start a story like this off without a suburban plant and a reader assumes you're talking about metropolitan apartment house life, and is unfairly surprised when he comes to a passage about someone going upstairs.

2. You might, if you want, clinch the suburban atmosphere by putting in here the name of some town in the region—Rye, or a Connecticut town.

3. Above you twice call this function an *evening party*, in one instance saying it begins in afternoon. Here you say the Spencers were asked to dinner. Now, even in the Spencer circle the dinner guests can't be asked to come in the afternoon, certainly. This mixing up of a dinner party and an evening party that begins in the afternoon baffled me for quite awhile, and I have come up with the suggestion that the party be made a cocktail party with buffet dinner. I think this a brilliant suggestion. . . .

4. It seems to me that the *however* isn't right in this sentence, and that some such phrase as marked might be better. Please consider.

5. This sentence won't parse as is. Needs insert such as marked, or *points out that* or some such. . . .

Pardon me for being fussy. Most of the foregoing not important, but I think that buffet dinner business is, and the locating of the story out of New York City. You'll see another proof of this, set in regular type. Some of the incidentals may be untimely by time this can be used. Can check on these later.

As ever,
Ross

To A. J. Liebling

July 26, 1949

Dear Joe:

I didn't know you'd gone [to Nevada] until the end of last week, although I expected it. That damned Reno is unique and one of the crazy places of the world, and stories are lying in the street there, unquestionably. . . .

One item that has always stuck in my mind: Even the drug stores out there have slot machines—you go in to buy some suppositories and stop at the door on the way out to gamble a couple of quarters. Well, Lucius Beebe told me that he called a surgeon's office to have some wound taken care of, and found a slot machine in the surgeon's waiting room. . . .

I'm full of things like that, but I was only there two days and you are a better reporter than I am (like hell) and have more time.

Good luck and God bless you.

As ever,
Ross

To George Jean Nathan

December 27, 1949

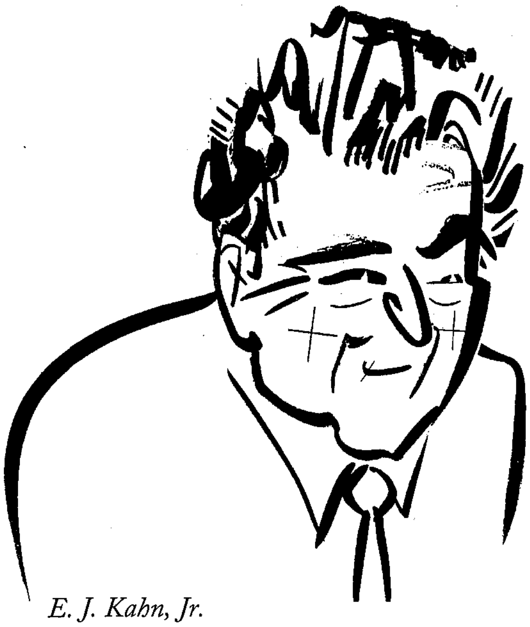
Dear George:

Your statement that most magazine successes have been helped largely by pure editorial accidents is a knowing and sagacious one. If it is off at all, it is off on the side of understatement. Look at *Life*, a recent example. It is wholly an accident. That zealot [Ralph] Ingersoll crammed the idea down Luce's throat, bullied him into getting it out. Luce himself told me (on the occasion when he spoke to me for the last time) that he would give a million dollars if he didn't have to come out with *Life*. (The first issue was then on the presses.) *The New Yorker* is pure accident from start to finish. I was the luckiest son of a bitch alive when I started it. Within a year White, Thurber, Arno, and Hokinson had shown up out of nowhere. I guess they had shown up within six months. And Gibbs came along very soon, and Clarence Day, and a number of other pathfinders I could name if I spent a little time in review. It just so happened, accidentally, that all that talent was around, waiting. . . .

Magazines are about eighty-five per cent luck. All an editor can do is have a net handy, to grab any talent that comes along, and maybe cast a little bread on the waters. . . .

As ever,
Ross

In 1950, E. J. Kahn, Jr., approached Ross about doing a Wayward Press piece critical of the popular columnist Westbrook Pegler, a neighbor and onetime friend of Ross's.



E. J. Kahn, Jr.

Memo to E. J. Kahn, Jr.

[March, 1950]

Mr. Kahn:

I have no objection, professionally or personally. Professionally, we must pursue our course and let the chips fall where they will. Personally, my creed is that a journalist is entitled to no friends, and I have never (so I claim) let personal considerations interfere with this undertaking. I don't give a hoot in this case, anyhow, and am for teasing Pegler a little now and then. . . .

Ross

All through the late spring and summer of 1951, Ross was away from the office recuperating from a chronic lung ailment. He told friends and colleagues it was pleurisy, but he knew it was cancer. He returned to work around the middle of September.

To E. B. White

[September, 1951]

Mr. White:

I am back at work on a break-in gradually basis. I am reading Newsbreaks and Talk anecdotes and doing a couple of other small things. The Newsbreaks are a pleasure. Through the years, they have remained my only weekly pleasure.

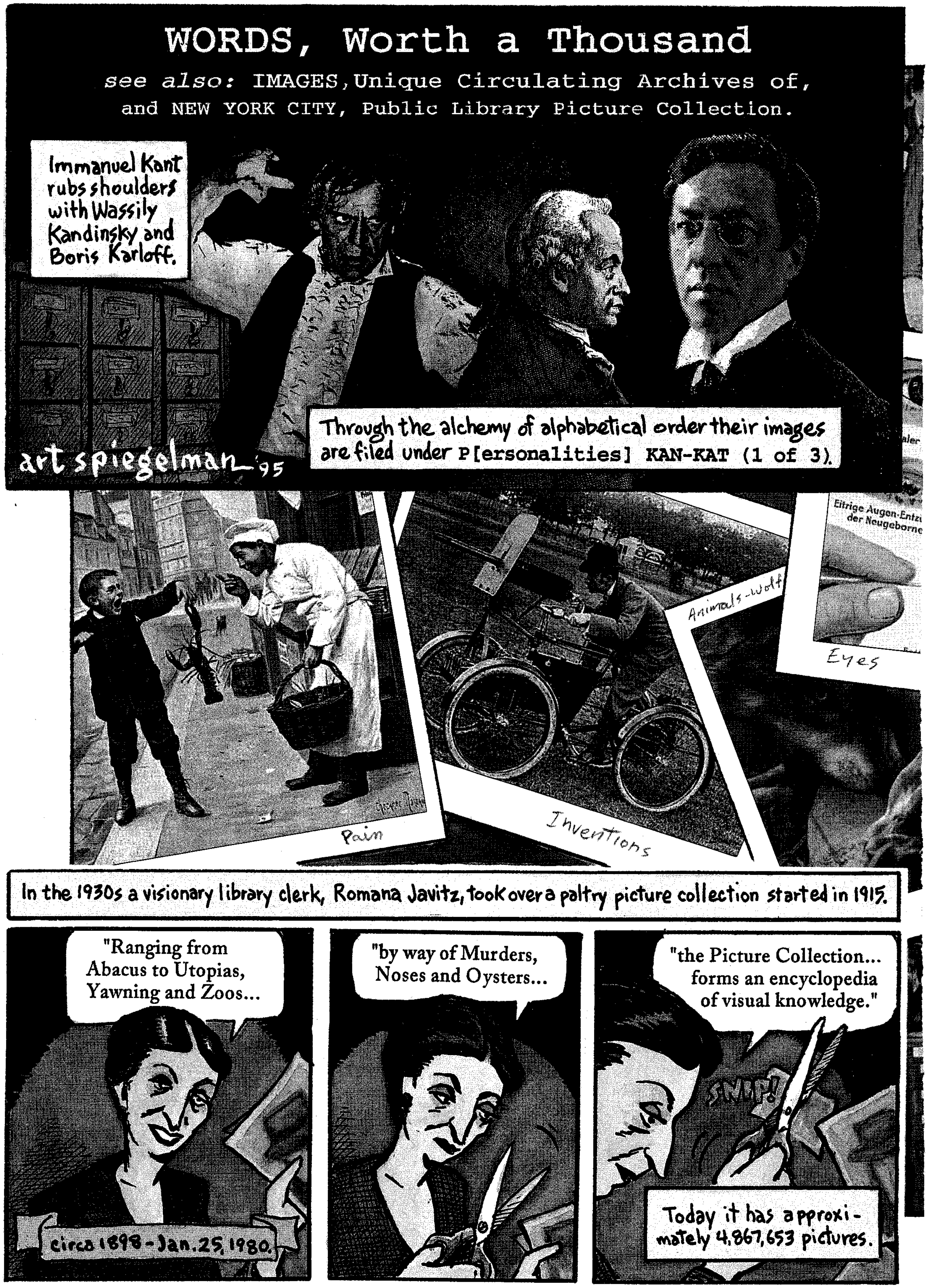
Pls. note [the head of the Checking Department, Frederick A.] Packard's note below this and decide how you want the item headed. Packard's first two sentences seem to contradict each other flatly, but you'll get what he means.

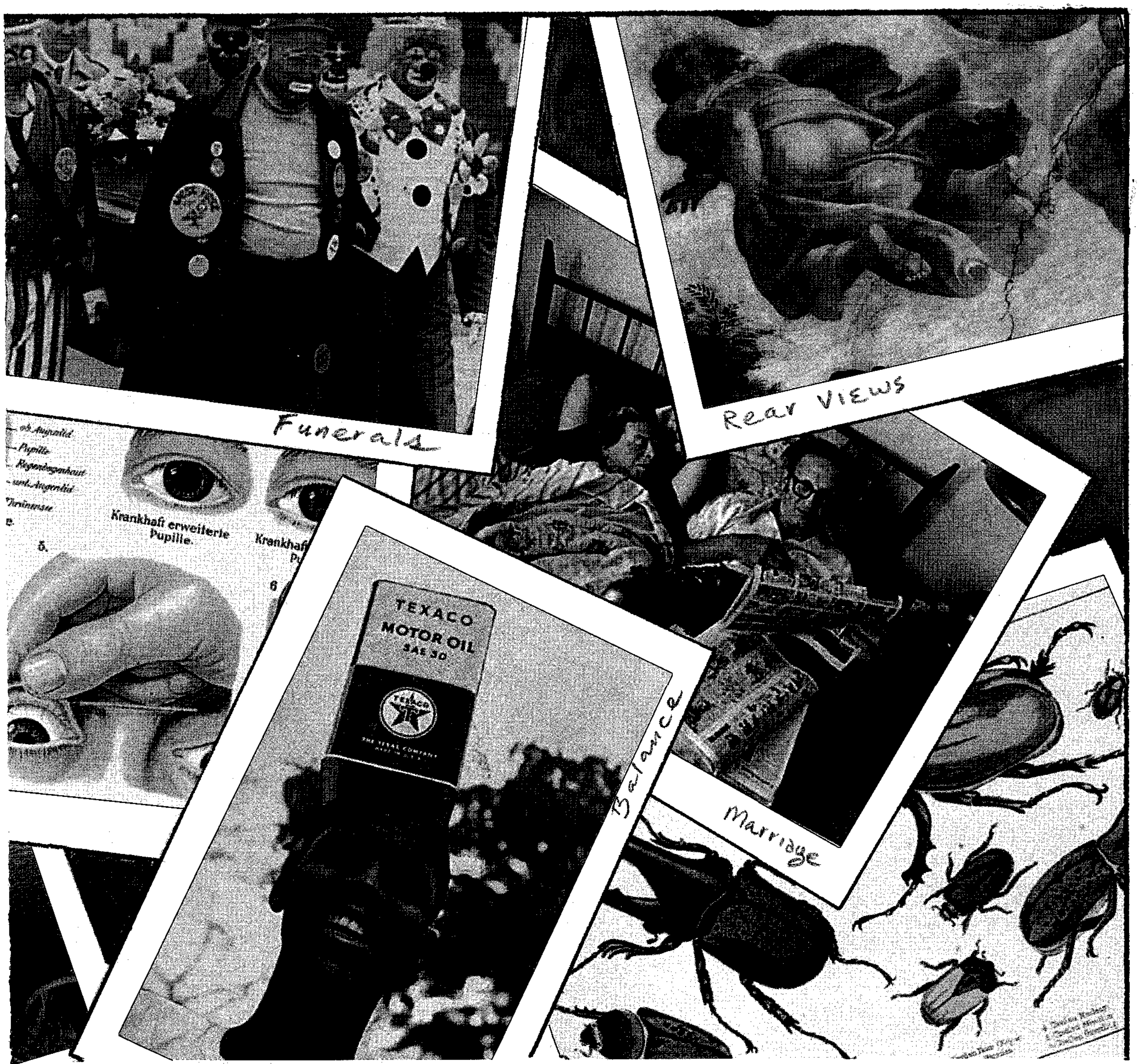
I marked English quote marks into this [a proposed Newsbreak], instead of stetting the French quotes. For one thing, I doubt if Nast has French quotes on hand for the Linotype machines, and if he hasn't he would have to borrow them from a French printer here. I was in the reverse of this situation once and know how tough it can be. I undertook to get out a black market publication in Paris during the First World War and made a deal with an American Army printing company (soldiers) to do the composition. They were glad to earn some money and worked cheap. The only thing was, there weren't any English quote marks in the French print shop in which they were stationed and did their work, and my copy was full of quotes. I had to provide English quotes. I had a drag with the foreman of the composing room of the *Daily Mail*, which printed the *Stars and Stripes*, upon which I was then employed, and he would lend me, for the daylight hours, the quote marks from the *Daily Mail's* machines. I had to have them back by dusk for use at the *Daily Mail* plant, or the *Daily Mail* wouldn't get to press. The French print shop was in the outskirts of Paris, twelve miles about from the *Daily Mail* plant, and for ten days I had to make two trips a day between the two places, delivering and recovering twelve small slivers of metal. I have never been the same since.

I don't know why I pause to tell you this. I should be writing my life, which is full of such oddities. ♦

WORDS, Worth a Thousand

see also: IMAGES, Unique Circulating Archives of, and NEW YORK CITY, Public Library Picture Collection.


Immanuel Kant rubs shoulders with Wassily Kandinsky and Boris Karloff.
art spiegelman '95
Through the alchemy of alphabetical order their images are filed under P[ersonalities] KAN-KAT (1 of 3).
Pain
Inventions
Animals-Wolf
Eitrige Augen-Entz
der Neugeborne
Eyes
In the 1930s a visionary library clerk, Romana Javitz, took over a paltry picture collection started in 1915.
"Ranging from Abacus to Utopias, Yawning and Zoos...
circa 1898 - Jan. 25, 1980.
"by way of Murders, Noses and Oysters...
"the Picture Collection... forms an encyclopedia of visual knowledge."
SNIP!
Today it has approximately 4,867,653 pictures.

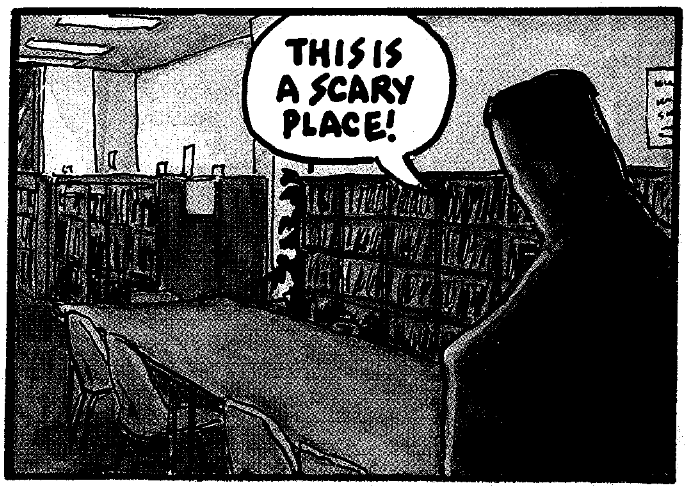

Funerals
Rear Views
Krankhaft erweiterte Pupille
TEXACO MOTOR OIL SAE 30
Balance
Marriage

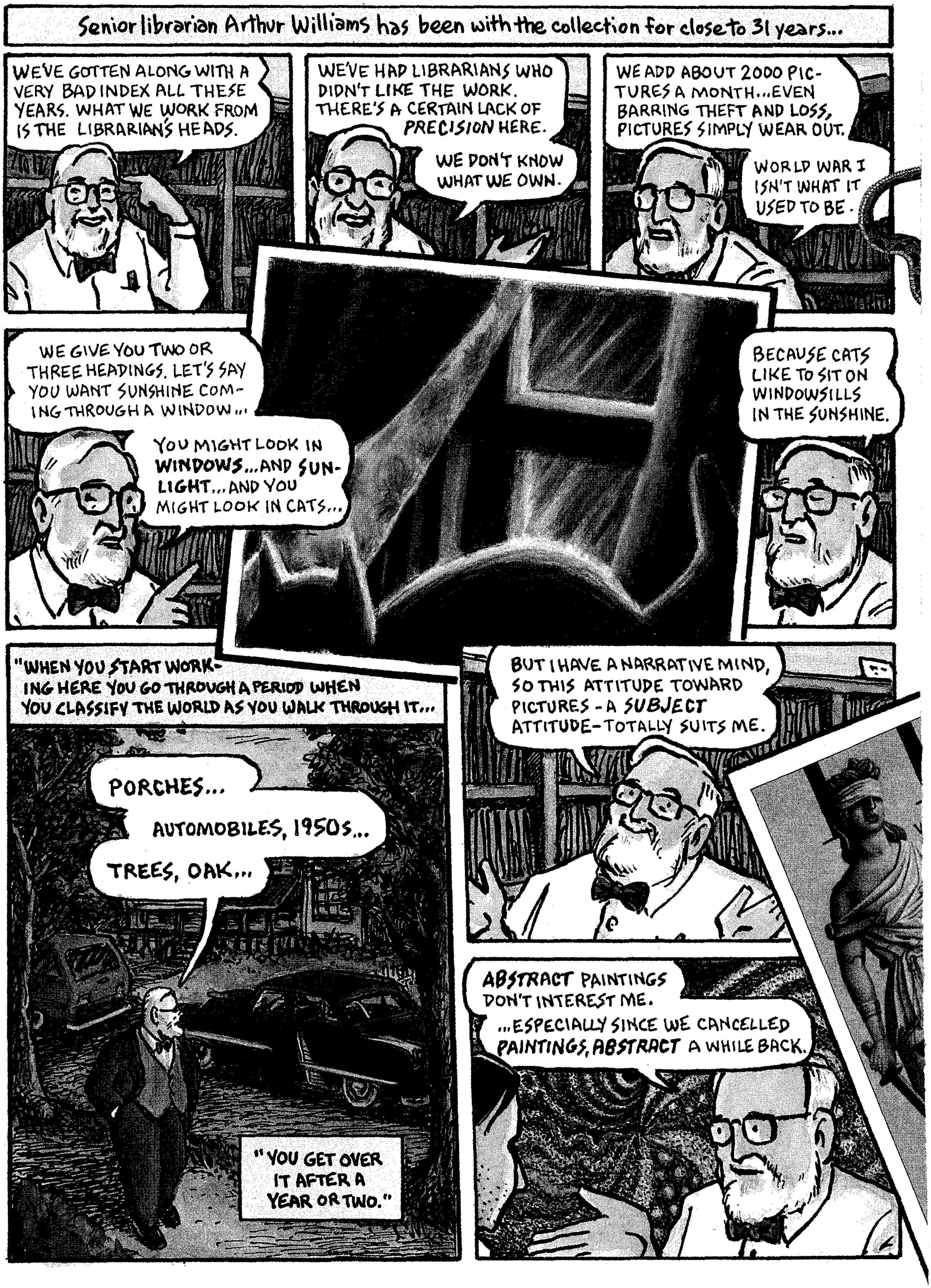
MARRIAGE: "MARILYN AND SAMUEL LEIBOVITZ, SILVER SPRING, MARYLAND, 1975." BY ANNIE LEIBOVITZ, REPRINTED WITH PERMISSION.
FUNERALS: JOE ROSSI/SAINT PAUL PIONEER PRESS. ANIMALS—WOLF: STEPHEN HOMER/FIRST LIGHT.

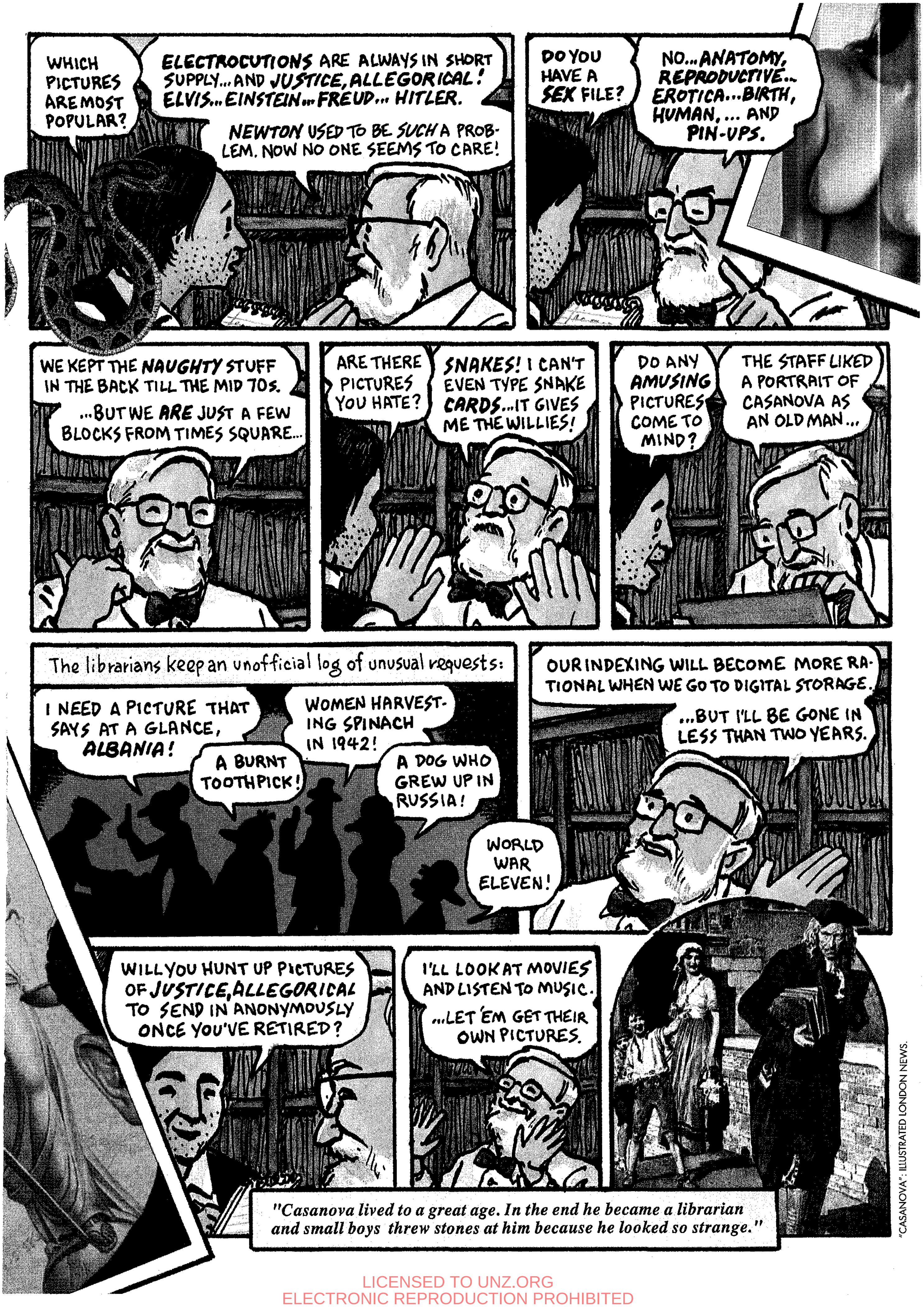
Artists are the collection's heaviest users, but in the 1940s Army Intelligence found thousands of photos of Japan invaluable.

In 1982, when the collection moved from 42nd Street to larger quarters at the Mid-Manhattan Library, Charles Addams said:

Anyone with a valid library card may borrow up to 150 pictures in 3 days.


THIS IS A SCARY PLACE!


Senior librarian Arthur Williams has been with the collection for close to 31 years...
WE'VE GOTTEN ALONG WITH A VERY BAD INDEX ALL THESE YEARS. WHAT WE WORK FROM IS THE LIBRARIAN'S HEADS.
WE'VE HAD LIBRARIANS WHO DIDN'T LIKE THE WORK. THERE'S A CERTAIN LACK OF PRECISION HERE.
WE DON'T KNOW WHAT WE OWN.
WE ADD ABOUT 2000 PICTURES A MONTH...EVEN BARRING THEFT AND LOSS, PICTURES SIMPLY WEAR OUT.
WORLD WAR I ISN'T WHAT IT USED TO BE.
WE GIVE YOU TWO OR THREE HEADINGS. LET'S SAY YOU WANT SUNSHINE COMING THROUGH A WINDOW...
YOU MIGHT LOOK IN WINDOWS...AND SUNLIGHT...AND YOU MIGHT LOOK IN CATS...
BECAUSE CATS LIKE TO SIT ON WINDOWSILLS IN THE SUNSHINE.
"WHEN YOU START WORKING HERE YOU GO THROUGH A PERIOD WHEN YOU CLASSIFY THE WORLD AS YOU WALK THROUGH IT...
PORCHES...
AUTOMOBILES, 1950S...
TREES, OAK...
"YOU GET OVER IT AFTER A YEAR OR TWO."
BUT I HAVE A NARRATIVE MIND, SO THIS ATTITUDE TOWARD PICTURES - A SUBJECT ATTITUDE - TOTALLY SUITS ME.
ABSTRACT PAINTINGS DON'T INTEREST ME.
...ESPECIALLY SINCE WE CANCELLED PAINTINGS, ABSTRACT A WHILE BACK.


WHICH PICTURES ARE MOST POPULAR?
ELECTROCUTIONS ARE ALWAYS IN SHORT SUPPLY...AND JUSTICE, ALLEGORICAL! ELVIS...EINSTEIN...FREUD... HITLER.
NEWTON USED TO BE SUCH A PROBLEM. NOW NO ONE SEEMS TO CARE!
DO YOU HAVE A SEX FILE?
NO...ANATOMY, REPRODUCTIVE... EROTICA...BIRTH, HUMAN, ... AND PIN-UPS.
WE KEPT THE NAUGHTY STUFF IN THE BACK TILL THE MID 70s.
...BUT WE ARE JUST A FEW BLOCKS FROM TIMES SQUARE...
ARE THERE PICTURES YOU HATE?
SNAKES! I CAN'T EVEN TYPE SNAKE CARDS...IT GIVES ME THE WILLIES!
DO ANY AMUSING PICTURES COME TO MIND?
THE STAFF LIKED A PORTRAIT OF CASANOVA AS AN OLD MAN...
The librarians keep an unofficial log of unusual requests:
I NEED A PICTURE THAT SAYS AT A GLANCE, ALBANIA!
WOMEN HARVESTING SPINACH IN 1942!
A BURNT TOOTHPICK!
A DOG WHO GREW UP IN RUSSIA!
WORLD WAR ELEVEN!
OUR INDEXING WILL BECOME MORE RATIONAL WHEN WE GO TO DIGITAL STORAGE.
...BUT I'LL BE GONE IN LESS THAN TWO YEARS.
WILL YOU HUNT UP PICTURES OF JUSTICE, ALLEGORICAL TO SEND IN ANONYMOUSLY ONCE YOU'VE RETIRED?
I'LL LOOK AT MOVIES AND LISTEN TO MUSIC.
...LET 'EM GET THEIR OWN PICTURES.
"Casanova lived to a great age. In the end he became a librarian and small boys threw stones at him because he looked so strange."

"CASANOVA": ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS.

POSTSCRIPT

THE LAST DAYS OF SYLVIA FRUMKIN

In 1981, this magazine published a series of articles about a young New York woman battling schizophrenia, the most severe—and, in her case, nearly untreatable—mental illness, and it became a standard reference on the disease. Here, the author writes the final chapter.

BY SUSAN SHEEHAN

Shortly after midnight on Friday, June 16, 1978, Sylvia Frumkin decided to take a bath. Miss Frumkin, a heavy, ungainly young woman who lived in a two-story yellow brick building in Queens Village, New York, walked from her bedroom on the second floor to the bathroom next door and filled the tub with warm water. A few days earlier, she had had her hair cut in a bowl style, which she found especially becoming, and her spirits were high. Miss Frumkin felt so cheerful that she suddenly thought she was Lori Lemaris, the mermaid whom Clark Kent had fallen in love with in the old "Superman" comics. She blew bubbles into the water. After a few minutes of contented frolicking, Miss Frumkin stepped out of the tub. She slipped on the bathroom floor and cut the back of her head as she fell.

She put on an old nightgown and went downstairs to the office of the building to tell the night supervisor, Dwight Miller, what had happened. Miller looked at the cut, told Miss Frumkin to get dressed, and said he would drive her to the emergency room at Long Island Jewish–Hillside Medical Center, a short distance away. As Miller started the car, turned on the car radio, and began to drive toward the hospital, Miss Frumkin seemed to get excited. The radio was playing Paul McCartney's song "The Lovely Linda." Unknown to Miller, Miss Frumkin thought that McCartney was singing the lyrics sarcastically, because he had fallen in love with her and was no longer in love with Linda, his wife. Miss Frumkin began to talk fervently to the radio. For a time, Miller was afraid she might jump out of the car. Miss Frumkin and Miller arrived at the emergency room at two o'clock. Miss Frumkin was interviewed and examined by a nurse. For a few minutes, she was in sufficient control of herself to let the nurse take her vital signs, test her neurological responses, and look at her cut, and to answer the questions that the nurse asked. Miss Frumkin became upset while waiting to see a doctor and an X-ray technician (she began to speak rapidly, and what she said concerned suffering from hypoglycemia and Wilson's disease and being Cinderella, and didn't make much sense); more upset when the X-ray technician took X-rays of her skull and the doctor sewed up the cut; and still more upset when it turned out that there would be a fairly long wait for the X-rays to be read. Miss Frumkin got so obstreperous while she and Miller were waiting that they were shown into a small treatment room, where they were joined by a hospital security guard. Miss Frumkin had made so many difficulties for the doctor who had stitched her cut—by flaunting her medical knowledge, testing his, accusing him of incompetence, calling him names, and threatening to sue him and the hospital—that he had called for the psychiatric resident on duty to examine her. In the small treatment room, Miss Frumkin's conduct became increasingly bizarre. She took off all her clothes, accused Miller of kidnapping her and making sexual advances, and then asked Miller and the security guard to have sexual relations with her. The minute the two men would cover Miss Frumkin with a hospital gown, she would disrobe again.

Around three o'clock, Dr. Conrad Aaronson came to observe and question Miss Frumkin. He found that she knew who she was, where she was, and what day it was. He found that her memory was difficult to assess, because she displayed marked "loosening of associations" (ideas slipping off one track and onto another, completely unrelated one) and "circumstantiality" (getting bogged down in a morass of trivial details that impede communication of a central idea), and also because she was extremely agitated, verbally abusive, and uncoöperative. In addition, some of her ideas were paranoid, and she expressed "delusions of reference," which is to say that she misinterpreted incidents and events in the outside world as having a direct personal reference to her: she told Dr. Aaronson not only that Paul McCartney had sung to her but also that she was going to marry another former Beatle, Ringo Starr. Dr. Aaronson described Miss Frumkin as "acutely psychotic." His impression of her condition was that it was an acute exacerbation of chronic schizophrenia. He found that Miss Frumkin was in no shape to return to her room in Queens Village.

She was asked if she would like to be admitted to the psychiatric division of L.I.J.-Hillside, where she had been a patient on two previous occasions. Instead, she asked to be taken to the Creedmoor Psychiatric Center, in Queens Village—a state mental institution. Miss Frumkin had been a patient at Creedmoor until about two weeks earlier.—*Condensed from "The Patient," 1981.*

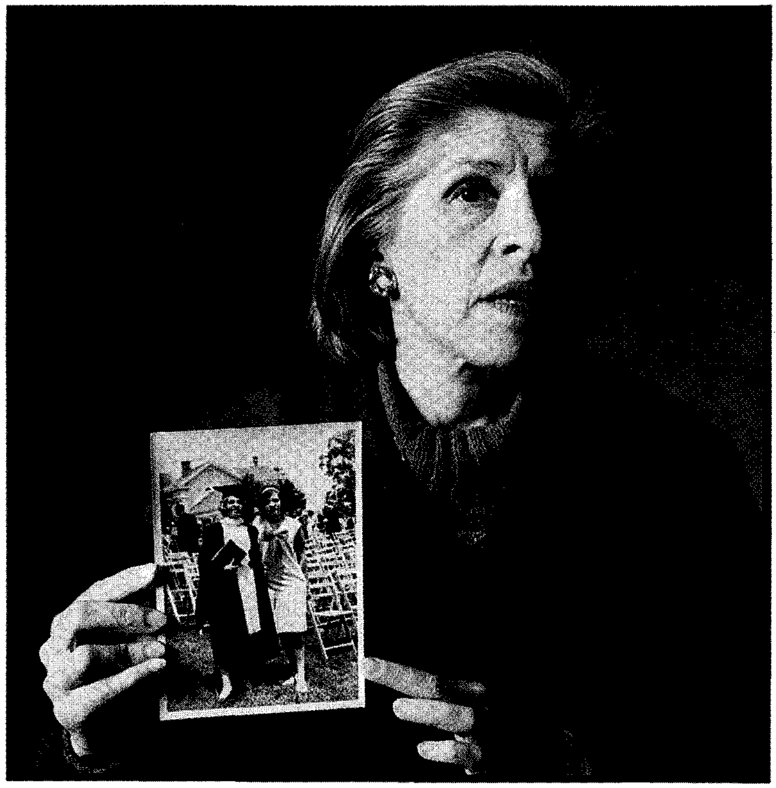
•

Maxine Mason, who became known as Sylvia Frumkin to readers of my four-part *New Yorker* article entitled "The Patient," died last November 17th, at Rockland Psychiatric Center, in Orangeburg, New York. The series was a study of schizophrenia and of the mental-health system based on Maxine's experiences; the pseudonym "Sylvia Frumkin" was adopted to protect her privacy. Maxine was a brilliant woman, given to Joycean monologues even in the midst of her illness, and to questions I could never forget. She gave me the title of the book in which the series was republished, in 1982: "Is There No Place on Earth for Me?" It was a question she had first asked her mother in an ambulance transporting her from one hospital to another in 1964, and one she never stopped asking.

I met Maxine on that June 16th, a month after her thirtieth birthday, when she was admitted to Creedmoor. When she was fourteen, her condition had been diagnosed as schizophrenia, and she had first been hospitalized at Creedmoor when she was sixteen. She was released after five months and was able to finish high school, but shortly after her graduation she returned to Creedmoor for twenty-seven months. Since her second release, in 1969, she had been in and out of private, city, and state hospitals, but mostly in: the June, 1978, Creedmoor hospitalization was her eighth, and it lasted until February 9, 1979. The ninth was from May, 1979, to January, 1980. When *The New Yorker* went to press in the spring of 1981, Maxine was back in Creedmoor for the tenth time.

For two and a half years, I observed Maxine's progress and setbacks at close range, chronicling her life in detail, and showing some of the hazards she ran in state hospitals. One was receiving misdiagnoses of her condition from foreign-born doctors. She told the Asian psychiatrist who admitted her in 1978 that she was Mary Poppins. He wrote on her chart that he was unable to elicit any delusions and concluded that she was a manic-depressive.

I had access to all Maxine's medical records, which enabled me to document the course of her illness from its onset. Schizophrenia, which afflicts one per cent of the population, is the world's most serious mental illness. Its symptoms include hallucinations, delusions, bizarre behavior, emotional withdrawal, and lack of motivation. The prevailing view of schizophrenia is that it is a variety of illnesses, many of which have a genetic factor that causes a chemical imbalance in the brain. Childhood environment that includes stress may, however, help to trigger the illness. It appeared that Maxine's environment met the test of stress. Frances and Sidney Mason, Maxine's parents, invited me to dinner at their house in Whitestone, Queens, on the first night of the Jewish New Year in 1978, when Maxine was home on a pass. Mrs. Mason observed that she had recently seen a couple whose daughter had often been a patient at Creedmoor with Maxine. The daughter had tried to commit suicide several times. Her last attempt had been successful, so her mother and father—he had been in poor health—were finally able to move to a warmer climate. On their last visit, "they looked so gorgeous," and the father was in fine health. "It's no wonder," Mrs. Mason went on. "The cause of all their trouble was removed." As Maxine, who was then about sixty-five pounds overweight and was exasperating her parents by overeating, reached for a fourth serving of food, she said, "Ma, are you trying to tell me something?" I wished I could crawl under the table.



Trudy Mason holds a photograph of Maxine, a.k.a. Sylvia, and herself at her college graduation. Maxine was fifteen and would be hospitalized for the first time the following year.

AMY ARBUS

Thorazine and the other antipsychotic drugs that were introduced in the nineteen-fifties worked wonders on thousands of schizophrenics, enabling them to live in the outside world, but they worked only limited wonders on Maxine, even when she was properly medicated, which wasn't often enough. She was frequently disagreeable, but what attracted me and others who knew her was her humor and her way with words. Listening to those Joycean monologues at Creedmoor made one wonder where her brilliance might have led her if her illness had not led her there.

AFTER the hardcover edition of my book was republished as a paperback, in 1983, and "Is There No Place on Earth for Me?" became part of the syllabus in many college and university courses in psychology and psychiatry, professors and students began sending me annual letters asking, in effect, What ever happened to Sylvia Frumkin? The first thing that happened was that Maxine liked the articles, and so did her older sister, Trudy Mason. Sidney Mason did not, but kept his opinion to himself. As Trudy commented, "When Daddy didn't want to deal with something, it didn't exist." Frances Mason hated the articles. She told Maxine—who gleefully told me—that she was furious about three facts: I had given her age (a number she regarded as a dark secret); I had written that she dyed her hair; and I had said that when she did volunteer work for a few hours once a week at a charitable organization she used the organization's postage meter to send out her personal mail.

Soon after the articles first appeared in print, Maxine was home again. Mrs. Mason didn't sound pleased to hear my voice when I telephoned Maxine every so often from my house, in Washington, but she always yelled "Maxine!" and Maxine came to the phone, unless she was watching a television show and shouted to her mother to have me call back later. Before yelling for Maxine, Mrs. Mason sometimes attempted to berate me for having betrayed her, but it didn't seem appropriate to argue with her. Instead, I mailed her copies of some of the hundreds of letters the magazine's readers had sent me—especially those from people who had concluded that she was a sympathetic figure, because there was nothing sadder than being the parent of a schizophrenic child.

On the afternoon of March 2, 1982, Sidney Mason, while walking across a busy intersection near his house, was struck by a car. He was killed instantly. When Maxine called to tell me, she reminded me that her father always drove his Plymouth Valiant at the speed of about ten miles an hour, and said she had assumed he would be rear-ended and killed by an impatient driver—a thought that had also occurred to me when I was his passenger. Maxine rarely spoke of her father again.

The hardcover edition of the book was published a month after his death. Maxine wanted to accompany me on the publicity tour—she was especially eager to appear on "60 Minutes"—but her mother threatened to throw her out of the house if she went on any television show. Having succeeded in keeping Maxine off the air, Mrs. Mason began sending me favorable reviews of the book, courtesy of the postage meter in the office of the charitable organization.

I was determined that my friendship with Maxine wouldn't end with publication. We had grown close as a result of the amount of time we had spent together at Creedmoor, sometimes sleeping on beds not far apart, and we had shared some good times. One day, I accompanied Maxine to the diner across the street from one of the gates, which was frequented by patients with grounds privileges. She introduced me to the proprietor-cashier as "the writer who is writing the story of my life." As we were eating lunch at a table near the register, we saw the proprietor point to Maxine and overheard her telling a trucker, who appeared to be a regular, "Now, that one, she's been coming here for ages and she's just your run-of-the-mill lunatic." Pointing in my direction, the proprietor continued, "But that new patient is in really deep trouble. She's so delusional she thinks she's a writer." Maxine smiled and said to me, "Susan, you could never be as good at being crazy as I am."

Maxine loved Manhattan. Spending a day there with her was an adventure. We met for brunch a few times at her favorite restaurant, the Cheese Cellar, in the East Fifties, where she always ate enough for six. As she almost always did when we ate out together, she asked me what I thought of her table manners. They were atrocious, but, mercifully, she never waited for a reply, because she had much more to ask of the waiters. Could she take the large menu on the table home as a souvenir? Yes. What about the table napkins? Of course. And one of the posters on the wall? No problem. Even when Maxine was not psychotic, she was different, and the waiters recognized and responded to this difference.

One Sunday, we left the Cheese Cellar laden with Maxine's trophies, plus a week's worth of food for her mother, which the waiter had wrapped up for her and presented in a Saks Fifth Avenue shopping bag. We were going to the theatre to see "Annie" and had more than an hour to spare. I asked Maxine if she would mind going with me to Fortunoff, where I wanted to buy a birthday present for my aunt. She did not mind, but she walked there slowly, stopping at the trash can on every street corner, foraging for the coupon sections of discarded Sunday newspapers. At Fortunoff, Maxine remembered that she had an envelope containing coupons that she needed to mail. By a miracle, the envelope had a stamp on it, but the glue on the envelope flap wasn't sticky and she couldn't seal it. "Fortunoff's is the solution," she said. As we went from the top floor to the ground floor of the store, I looked at silver, crystal, and china. While I was choosing my aunt's present, Maxine asked the women who were wrapping gifts on every floor for a piece of Scotch Tape. The gift wrappers responded as the waiters invariably did, and the envelope was soon securely closed with four pieces of tape.

Maxine loved "Annie," and sat through it reasonably quietly. At intermission, she said she wanted a drink. I gave her the money for it and stayed in my seat, watching over her shopping bag (it was filled with Belgian waffles and whipped cream, an assortment of meats and cheeses, and a dozen pieces of cake) and our coats. She returned with orangeade, looking flustered. "I don't know why that lady over there is so upset with me," she said, settling into her seat and laying her large pocketbook on her lap. "All I did was hit her daughter on the head with my pocketbook, and I didn't mean to. Accidents happen."

Our friendship was not easy to sustain, because the underside of the schizophrenia which the medications could not reach was always with Maxine. Her illness made her extremely egocentric and unhappy. It would have been cruel of me to hold Maxine to standards she could not meet, so I tried to make the friendship work by being a friend on her terms. Just as I did not criticize her table manners, I also did not object to her coupon searches while walking in Manhattan, or tell her that my other friends either accepted phone calls when they were watching television or said *they* would call *me* back later. I let Maxine choose the restaurants, the plays, the movies, and I laughed when she told a joke for the tenth time.

Yet nothing was ever simple. Giving her a gift was often as complicated as going on an outing. Once, when she was getting ready for a trip to Niagara Falls, I mailed her a box of what I considered thoughtful birthday presents. I no longer remember what all of them were, but one was luggage tags inscribed with her name and address, and another was a travel diary. She found fault with them. On this occasion, thinking it would benefit her to learn to say "Thank you" if someone gave her a gift—or, at least, to practice the virtue of golden silence—I lit into her. From then on, she sent me short, polite thank-you notes. "The potpourri sits on my cabinet and makes my room smell like a spice garden," she wrote in December of 1983.

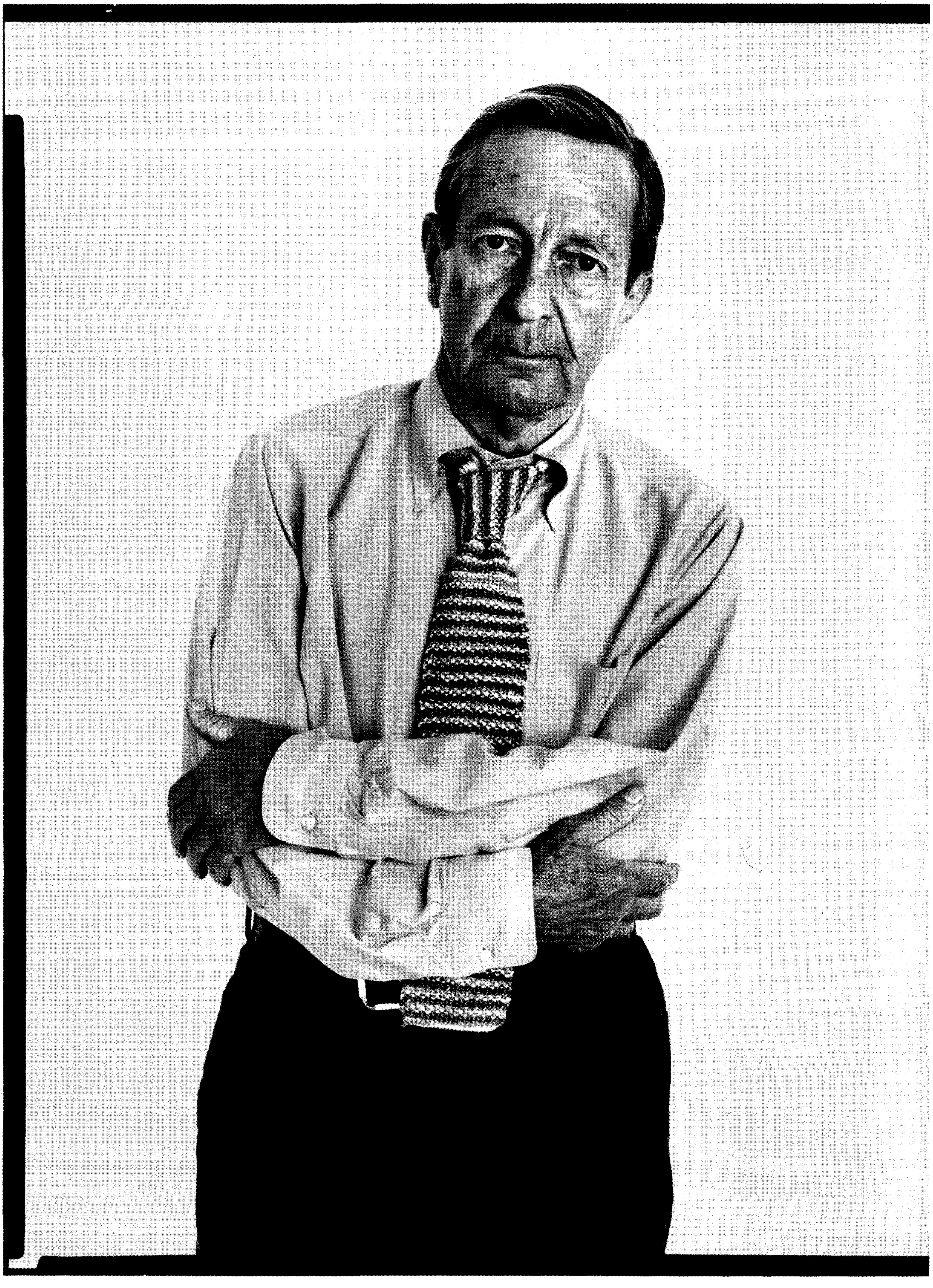
I would have been angrier with myself for this misguided attempt at behavior modification than I already was if Maxine hadn't found a way to retaliate. In 1978, while I was still interviewing her for the articles, she asked me the color of my bedroom (blue) and had me meet her in a Queens department store to buy her crochet needles, an afghan pattern book, and many skeins of acrylic yarn in white and three shades of blue. No afghan came. A few years later, following my thank-you lecture, the afghan arrived. It was beautifully crocheted and had a label sewn into it that read "Made especially for you by Maxine Mason." I was deeply moved, and said so, thanking her then for what I regarded as a labor of love, and repeating my appreciation many winters thereafter. My gratitude didn't mollify her. "You've never given me a present that can compare to the afghan," she said. I didn't know how to respond, and Maxine didn't care for golden silence. "I gave you a book, and you've really never given me anything," she added.

ACTUALLY, I had given her something: something good that resulted from the article. While I was researching "The Patient," Dr. Gideon Seaman, the director of medical education at Creedmoor, had agreed to review

JOHN CHEEVER

John Cheever, the Homer of suburbia, wrote stories that ran the full passage from the youthful nineteen-thirties to the anxious eighties. His hundred-and-twenty-odd works of fiction transformed "the little New Yorker short story" into a vessel for complex modern heroes—by turns pagan and comical, lustful and immensely sad.

Photograph by Richard Avedon
New York City, October 29, 1981.



the medications that had been prescribed for Maxine over the entire course of her illness. After the series was published, he took Maxine on as a private patient.

When Maxine's schizophrenia was first diagnosed, she had been given antipsychotic drugs, whose purpose is to help correct the failure of schizophrenics' brains to work the way normal people's brains work. Over the next seventeen years, she was given many of the twenty or so antipsychotics then in use in America, because she failed to respond well to any of them. (About fifteen per cent of schizophrenics are what is known as "treatment-resistant.") Maxine, like many schizophrenic patients, tended to stop taking her medication when she felt well—that is, when she was stabilized on a certain medication—and she also didn't take it when she considered herself "born again," as she did from time to time after 1974. (Many schizophrenics hear voices, so they tend to be preoccupied with religiosity.) Since Maxine was treatment-resistant, she tended to need more medication than other patients, and would become psychotic again, or "decompensate," when she was undermedicated or had stopped taking her medications altogether. Nonetheless, Dr. Seaman kept her well medicated for quite some time.

I kept carbons of some of my answers to the "What ever happened to Sylvia Frumkin?" letters. One reply, dated March 26, 1984, relates the effect that Dr. Seaman's treatment was having on Maxine:

> Sylvia Frumkin [I did not violate Maxine's privacy during her lifetime] is doing quite well. She has not had a psychotic episode since 1981 and has now been out of an institution for longer than any time in her adult life—going on three years. The credit for this belongs to the psychiatrist she is seeing, who has her well medicated and who seems to be giving her the type of therapy that is of help to her.
>
> However, Sylvia is still not employable. She goes to job interviews but there is something about her that makes people wary of hiring her. . . . Her mother has just been diagnosed as having cancer. . . . I don't know how many months or years she has left. [Her] death will have a profound effect on Sylvia. On the one hand, there won't be the terrible daily battles, which continue just as they did in 1978, 1979, 1980. On the other hand, Sylvia will have no home and will have to live in some sort of communal housing, which she doesn't fare well in. [Her] mother's death could precipitate a "sink or swim" situation and I hope Sylvia will swim.

In late July and early August of 1984, Frances Mason was dying of cancer of the esophagus at Beth Israel Medical Center. Making hospital visits was difficult for Maxine. I went to see Mrs. Mason alone, or with Trudy. By then, she had admitted to Trudy that she felt having a daughter like Maxine was a *shanda* (Yiddish for "disgrace"). I had held up a mirror to the family, and Mrs. Mason hadn't liked her reflection, but it was accurate and she seemed to have forgiven me. She was brave to the end, which came for her on August 11th. Frances Mason was buried next to her husband in a cemetery in New Jersey. The double gravestone has chiselled on it Sidney Mason's dates of birth and death, but, at her request, Mrs. Mason's inscription includes no date of birth.

On her deathbed, she had said to Trudy, "I feel guilty that I'm leaving you with this burden. You must promise not to let your life revolve around your sister, but I'll rest peacefully because you've promised me willingly that Maxine will be *farzorgt*," or looked after.

Maxine was thirty-six when her mother died. Many parents abandon their schizophrenic children before they reach that age. Young people with schizophrenic siblings often move far away from home, even during their parents' lifetimes. A nurse at Bellevue once observed, "Most of our patients don't have relatives. They have worn their families out." Yet Trudy, who was born six years before Maxine, would not have deserted her sister, whatever her mother's final mixed message.

In 1963, the year Maxine received her first diagnosis of schizophrenia, Trudy graduated from Wheaton College and returned to New York. Three years later, while working in the first of numerous government jobs she came to hold, she was already the Masons' designated driver during Maxine crises; in 1966, she drove Maxine from Greenwich Village back to a psychiatric hospital in Queens that she had run away from. In 1978, right after we met, Trudy was appointed director of government affairs and community relations for the New York State Metropolitan Transportation Authority. In 1984, she left the M.T.A. to become New York State press secretary for the

"Could I have another machine? This man is reading a comic book."

Mondale-Ferraro campaign. Trudy was well wired, and, to her credit and her sister's benefit, she never hesitated to pull a wire on Maxine's behalf.

In the spring of 1984, Maxine couldn't find a job, so Trudy helped procure one for her at a Medicaid office on West Thirty-fourth Street. The job, for which Maxine qualified as a disabled person, paid the minimum wage. She started off as a receptionist, but found answering phones and taking messages too stressful. She retreated to being a file clerk, and immediately complained to me about the boredom of filing. "I'd rather stay in bed all day," she said.

By late summer, Maxine was living alone in the Whitestone house, because of their mother's hospitalization—an arrangement that made Trudy uneasy, and for good reason. Maxine had never been able to survive on her own, even in a room at the Y. She was careless and lazy. The neighbors came over one day after Maxine had put all the dirty dishes in the kitchen sink and turned the water on—"so that the dishes would wash themselves"—and found water all over the floor. Once when Trudy visited, the kitchen stove was on and Maxine was holding a dish towel close to the gas flames.

Toward the end of 1984, several months before Trudy sold her parents' house, she was able to place Maxine in a supportive-living program that offered apartments to former mental patients. Maxine joined two other young women in a two-bedroom apartment in Astoria. To be admitted to such an apartment, one either had to go to school or to a job, do volunteer work, or attend a supervised day program. Residents were expected to shop and cook and to keep their apartments clean. Twice a week, a program staff member came by to check up on them. In July of 1985, Maxine called me to say she couldn't get along with her roommates and hated her job. She was upset about the possibility of being thrown out of her apartment but was unyielding in her refusal to clean the place up. I had tried to humor her into liking filing, and I attempted the same tactic now with cleaning, but Maxine could never pick up a sponge with a light heart. That fall, she saw Dr. Seaman erratically, had a psychotic break, and landed in Elmhurst, a city hospital in Queens. In February, 1986, she was back in Creedmoor, for the first time in five years. When Maxine was about to decompensate, she would become involved with a religious group—Buddhists, Jews for Jesus, or born-again Christians—and hear "the voice of God" telling her to stop taking her medication. She telephoned me from Elmhurst to say she had had a relapse, and told me—not for the first time—that I was a Christian but would burn in Hell, because I had not been born again.

NOT long after Maxine got to Creedmoor in 1986, she became stabilized on medication. In May, she wrote me the most upbeat letter I was ever to receive from her. It was also the only one in which she expressed appreciation rather than resentment of Trudy, who, with her slimness and college education and Upper East Side apartment and upper-level jobs—and, most of all, her not having schizophrenia—was everything Maxine wanted for Maxine.

She wrote:

> Trudy and I went out for my birthday and I got my haircut. It was done by the owner of the salon. Without reservation it is practically the best haircut I ever had! It is called, or at least I think it is called the Cap Cut. I also had a manicure and a pedicure. The girl who did my pedicure struggled and I mean *struggled* for almost or more than an hour with my calouses because the last time I had had a pedicure was before I went to Elmhurst General Hospital, and that was almost 8 months ago, and calouses have a way of growing a umongous amount in 8 months.
>
> So any way, we ate out and we had a surprisingly good time and since then we have been nice to each other on the phone except that she still likes to lecture. But thank goodness the bitterness is gone.
>
> There is other news, good and bad. I had the screening interview for the apartment program for readmission. They told me that I would know in a week if I am back in (good news), but they don't know when they will have an apartment available (bad news). So isn't that delightful. Here I am stuck in a mental hospital and I am no longer mentally ill and have not been for a month according to both my doctors (Dr. Seaman included), my sister, and other people who know me. Such is life. What's more I don't know how long I will have yet to remain. I'd say such is life but this place is as you well know like the opposite of life as we know it. But what can I do???? So be it.

Then, in a long P.S.:

> There was something very important that I forgot to tell you. In September I may (a very definite *may*) be going back to school. LaGuardia Community College . . . has a program for discharged psychiatric patients, in which you study one of *the Human Services Disciplines. In two* years, if I can stand it, I'll be the proud possessor of an Associate of Arts (A.A.) degree. Then I hope to go for a Batchelor's and finally a Master's in Music Therapy.

MAXINE didn't really want to return to the supportive-living program, because she didn't want anyone harrying her to go to work or to do her share of cleaning, but it was her only option. She stayed at Creedmoor until June 18, 1986—the time it took Trudy to pull the necessary wires to overcome Maxine's record in the first apartment. Maxine had returned to Dr. Seaman's private care and was continuing to take her medication. The high point of her summer was a commercial bus tour to Virginia Beach and Colonial Williamsburg. "I liked wherever the bus went," she told me. "It was nice riding through the Baltimore tunnel."

Maxine didn't go to LaGuardia Community College in the fall. She had quit the Medicaid job before she wound up in Elmhurst, and to qualify for admission to another apartment in Astoria she volunteered to read to the blind. She soon quit that, too. In March of 1987, Trudy asked a friend to give Maxine a part-time job with Special Citizens Futures Unlimited, Inc., an organization that provides vocational and residential services for autistic young people. Maxine was given carfare and lunch money in exchange for assisting with fund-raising and mailings. In mid-May, Peter Yarrow, of Peter, Paul & Mary, who is a close friend and a former beau of Trudy's, sang at a benefit for Special Citizens, held at the Copacabana. Maxine greeted people and gave them their table assignments. In August, the friend asked Trudy for an out: the office was small, and Maxine's presence was intolerable—she was much more difficult than the friend's autistic brother. Her dirty clothes got progressively dirtier and she refused to bathe. Trudy's friend said that Maxine's eating habits were a problem, and added, "She was not just irritating and upsetting, she was malevolent, cantankerous, invasive, and draining to be around. Whatever you did for her and gave her, it was never enough." By then, Maxine had also been asked to leave the supportive-living apartment, because her presence there was equally intolerable.

That summer, Maxine was apartment hunting in Queens. She received monthly checks from the Social Security Administration, because she had been severely disabled before she was twenty-two, and whenever she wasn't in the hospital she also received a monthly Supplemental Security Income check. These checks gave her a modest income, to which Trudy added. Maxine found an unfurnished studio apartment in Jamaica Estates for four hundred dollars a month. During this period, Trudy was having joint sessions with Maxine and Dr. Seaman, and, with the blessing of her own therapist, she met with Dr. Seaman alone to discuss Maxine. Trudy remembers his saying that if Maxine were given the responsibility of maintaining an apartment she would rise to the occasion. In late August, Maxine apparently stopped taking her medication. She entered Gracie Square Hospital, a private hospital, in mid-September. While Maxine was there, Trudy went to look at the Jamaica Estates studio. On September 21st, against her better judgment, she gave the landlord a check for the security deposit and the first month's rent. She had to co-sign the lease, because Maxine had no banking or credit-card history. Maxine, back on medication, moved into the studio on October 1st.

To enter Maxine's building, which was three stories high, one went down three steps. Eight apartments and a laundry room were on this English-basement level. Maxine's studio—her first apartment of her own—had kitchen appliances on one wall of the bedroom–living room; a window running the length of another wall; and a separate bathroom. It was originally furnished with pieces from her parents' house, a recliner from one of the Astoria apartments, and several new purchases, among them a high-riser, so that a guest could spend the night on the pullout bed.

Maxine said she was eager to work, and Trudy got her another low-paying job—as a messenger for the city. Maxine's enthusiasm for being a messenger quickly waned, and she dismissed my attempts to tell her that walking was the best possible exercise. "It's demeaning, my sister is a big shot, and I hate exercise," she retorted. She was five feet four, and by 1988 she weighed over two hundred pounds. She huffed and puffed as she walked from one city building to another delivering mail in lower Manhattan.

In November of 1988, not long before Trudy was due to leave for a conference in Israel, Maxine disappeared. The Masons had always cancelled their modest plans when Maxine had "an episode," but Trudy was determined to lead her own life while overseeing her sister's. After Mrs. Mason's death, Maxine rarely mentioned her mother to me, but she periodically called Trudy Mommy. "I am not your mother, and I'm not going to behave like your mother," Trudy often corrected her. Knowing from experience that Maxine would be found when she wanted to be found, Trudy flew to Tel Aviv. She beeped her answering machine from a public phone on a street in Jerusalem. Among the messages was one from Gideon Seaman, who said that Maxine was staying in New Jersey with some Christians and sounded all right. Trudy returned to New York on December 6th. A week later, Maxine resurfaced—in a psychiatric hospital in New Jersey, where she remained until March.

Maxine did not return to her messenger job, but she did return to her apartment. She had functioned in it, in her lazy fashion, for thirteen months—from October, 1987, until November, 1988. Only a decent landlord and a series of sympathetic supers had kept her from being evicted. She functioned there, in an even lazier fashion, for the next year and eight months—from March, 1989, until December, 1990. When she went into Manhattan during that period—to see Dr. Seaman, to go to the Lamb's Center for Counseling Services, on West Forty-fourth Street (with which her born-again Christian psychiatrist, Dr. O. Quentin Hyder, was affiliated), or to go to the movies—she took a car service home from the subway to avoid a short uphill walk. She discovered that a neighborhood supermarket delivered groceries for a one-dollar charge, and, subsequently, that for an additional dollar she could call in her order, and she considered the two dollars well invested.

In 1987, Maxine had opened a checking account. She chose pretty, flowered checks, which she carried in a flowered pink checkbook cover; pink had been her favorite color since she was a child. She was close to forty when she got her first private telephone, rented her first safe-deposit box, and opened her first charge account—at Lane Bryant, a store that carries only large sizes. She was proud of these symbols of adulthood, which those of us to whom life has dealt a better hand tend to take for granted. She sent checks to cover her phone and utility bills, gave periodic checks to a cleaning woman or a cleaning service, and to a drugstore for her medications. She dispatched numerous checks to mail-order houses—to L'eggs for socks, to Colonial Garden Kitchen for gadgets, to Columbia House for cassettes, and to "The Best Catalogs in the World" for more catalogues, for which she paid two dollars apiece.

Maxine wore out the narrow high-riser, which had a thin mattress (she never lay down or sat down—she clunked down), without ever entertaining an overnight guest. When she was young and slender, she had occasionally dated, but no one knew for sure whether she had ever made love to a man. As she grew increasingly obese and careless about her hygiene, it seemed less and less likely that she had a sex life. Although she told dirty jokes, she was narrow-minded and straitlaced. She badmouthed lesbians, gays, and other minorities. When I took my mother and daughters to the movies with Maxine in 1980, she had whispered loudly in my ear that the kissing scenes were "a bit risqué" for the children (who were then eleven and thirteen) and for my mother.

Maxine never spoke of being idle—a fact I attributed to the greatest ability to make mountains out of molehills I have ever observed. A single mail-order purchase easily became a weeklong obsessive enterprise. The musical-note magnets she ordered for her refrigerator pleased her, but a yogurt-maker did not. Getting it back into the box (Maxine was clumsy), addressing the label (she wrote slowly and her handwriting was difficult to decipher), and taking it to the post office consumed her. Her phone bills often came to more than a hundred dollars a month. She telephoned mail-order houses (the ones she favored did not have 800 numbers) to chat with customer-service operators about prospective purchases and returns. Every once in a while, Maxine thought that she had found a friend—usually a woman she had met in one or another psychiatrist's waiting room who suffered from some less serious form of mental illness. She often called the prospective friend a dozen times a day, quickly driving her away. Maxine's phone bills included very few phone calls to friends. As proof of my affection, she wanted me to call her. When I did, the television set was usually on, and, over time, it distracted her increasingly; I could also hear her slurping a beverage or munching crackers. The doorbell sometimes rang as she was talking—I eventually became an almost silent listener—and when Chinese carry-out food arrived she dug right in to it noisily, still talking.

By the end of 1990, Maxine was involved once more with born-again Christians, saw Gideon Seaman rarely, and had less and less to say to me. Dr. Seaman persuaded her to come to his office on the evening of Thursday, December 20th. Maxine called Trudy from a phone booth to say she had walked out on him. Two hours later, an employee of a McDonald's a block from Dr. Seaman's called Trudy, because Maxine was there. She had told him she was psychotic and had given him Trudy's phone number. Trudy called Dr. Seaman and took a cab to the McDonald's. Dr. Seaman asked her to bring Maxine back to his office. Maxine refused to go, so Dr. Seaman came out. He and Trudy shared a cab to Bellevue with Maxine seated between them; she was ready to jump out any number of times.

At Bellevue, Dr. Seaman told the admitting doctor the medications on which he had maintained Maxine for nine years—when she took them—and left. According to the Bellevue doctor, Maxine was talking to herself, mumbling incoherently, suffering from delusions of grandeur ("I am an actress"), and religiously preoccupied ("You are cursed by the Cross"). At Bellevue, Maxine was put back on her medications (she admitted she had stopped taking them) and was treated for various physical ailments, including a urinary-tract infection. Although she barely functioned at Bellevue, she was discharged on March 27, 1991.

"Henry is a night person."

• •

Over the next five weeks, her condition deteriorated. The apartment was bearable for a few days after its latest professional cleaning; then the smells of sour milk and orange juice in unemptied containers and the odor of stained bedclothes and soiled underwear pervaded the hallway, and the neighbors complained yet again.

On May 2, 1991, Maxine failed to show up for an appointment she and Trudy had with Dr. Hyder. Trudy called Maxine's super, and learned that Maxine was not in her apartment that day. The super telephoned Trudy on May 3rd. He had heard loud music coming from the apartment all night, and now Maxine was sitting on the front steps of the building tearing up books and giving away cassettes. When Trudy reached the apartment, around midday, Maxine had wandered off. Trudy headed for a neighborhood Pentecostal church that Maxine had been attending, but she wasn't there. By the time Trudy returned to the apartment, Maxine had come back and taken off again. Trudy looked for her in vain in shops along Jamaica Avenue. Finally, she saw Maxine sitting on the top step of a subway entrance, wearing only a sweatshirt, shorts, and sandals, eating a Whopper from Burger King.

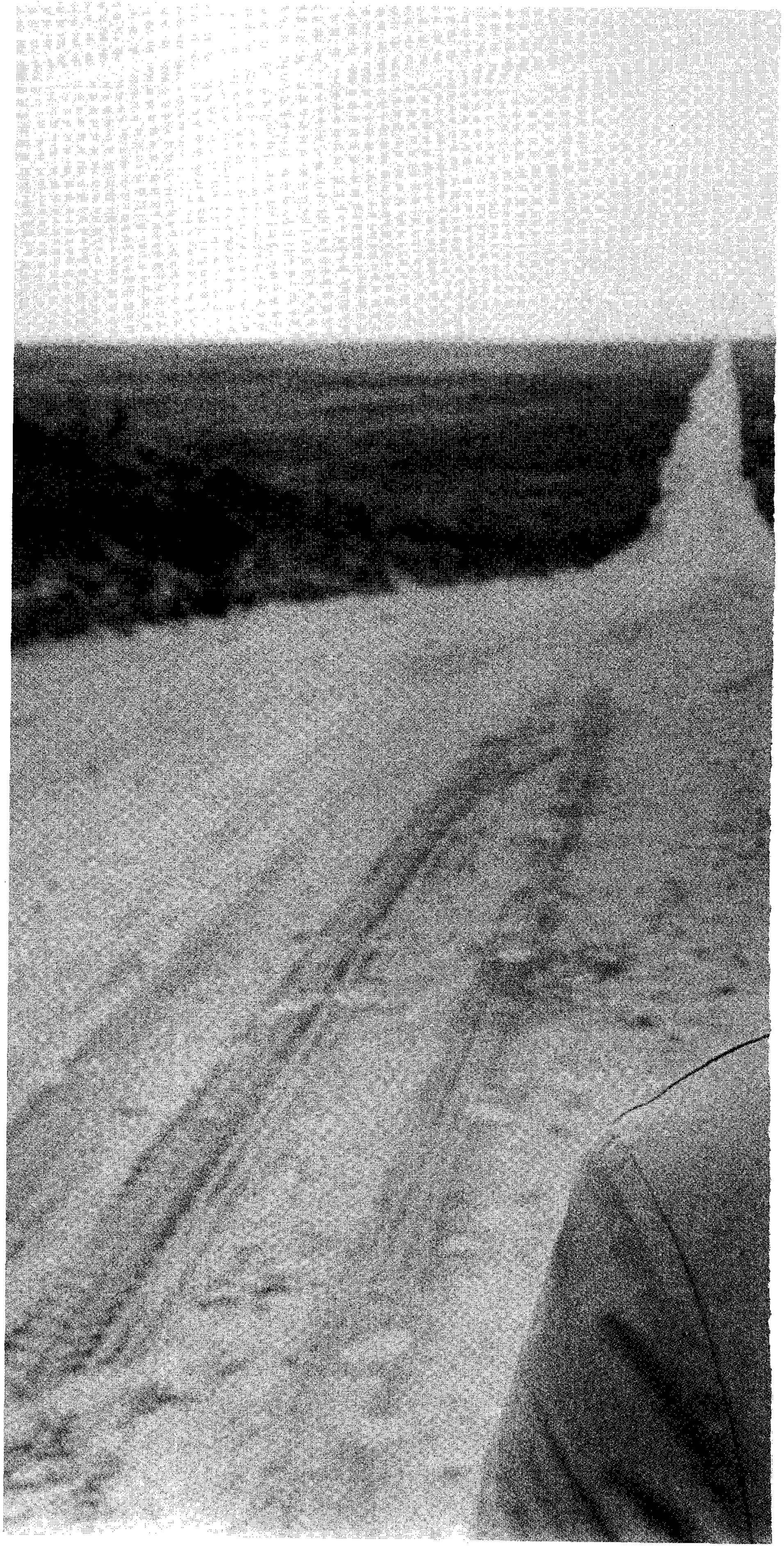
"Maxine, I've been looking all over, and everyone's so worried," Trudy said, as she approached her.

"You can't follow me, and I'm going to the movies," Maxine snapped, pushing her sister away and running down the stairs.

For a while, Trudy pursued Maxine up and down stairs, but Maxine finally got through a turnstile. The station was large, with four sets of tracks and two platforms. The chase continued as trains came and went. At one point, Maxine beat Trudy with her hands and then ran off; Trudy caught up with her just as she boarded an F train. "This woman is trying to kidnap me!" Maxine shouted. "She's from the thought police!" Some passengers sat still, ignoring the scene; some moved to other cars.

At Queens Plaza, where the F and R trains converge, Maxine scampered off the F train; pushed Trudy, who was begging her to calm down, out of her way; and got on an incoming R train. Trudy, who had followed her, screamed, "Please, is there a police officer on this train? My sister is mentally ill," as Maxine started running up and down the car. Maxine calmed down a bit at the Lexington Avenue stop, and Trudy asked her if she wanted to go to Bloomingdale's. Maxine didn't answer. Out of desperation, Trudy pulled the emergency cord to stop the train as it approached the Fifty-seventh Street station. As a former M.T.A. executive, she expected that her action would bring a transit-police officer into the car.

The train stopped before entering the station. The officer directed everyone else in the car in which Maxine and Trudy were riding to other cars, then signalled the engineer to start up again. The engineer pulled the train over to a sidetrack, and the other passengers disembarked. Trudy identified herself to the transit police, explained that Maxine had recently been released from Bellevue, and asked them to call the Emergency Medical Service. Trudy then



TRUMAN CAPOTE

Truman Capote began his career as an office boy at The New Yorker, where he is said to have appointed himself a kind of shadow art editor, tossing aside all submitted cartoons that did not meet his rigorous standard. Eventually, he applied that standard to the art of nonfiction, publishing "In Cold Blood" as a four-part article in 1965. No amount of publicity or partygoing would ever tarnish the achievement.

Photograph by Richard Avedon
Garden City, Kansas, October, 1965.

got off the car. While waiting for the E.M.S. to show up with an ambulance, she looked at Maxine, who was alone in the sealed-off car, alternately sitting, standing, pacing, running, jumping, and banging on the windows. Trudy thought, Maxine always said we were making a movie, but how did things come to this?

The following evening, Trudy telephoned me and recounted the chase. She said that it had been the most harrowing day of her life. I realized that she was upset with herself. Pursuing Maxine was what her mother had done and what she had therefore vowed never to do.

GIDEON SEAMAN suggested to the Bellevue psychiatrist assigned to Maxine's case, Dr. John Graham, that she be given Clozaril, an antipsychotic drug that had been approved by the Food and Drug Administration in 1990 and was considered the first major breakthrough in schizophrenia medication in forty years. Early tests had shown that it improved schizophrenic patients' negative symptoms (emotional withdrawal, lack of motivation, inattention, and inability to feel pleasure), which the whole earlier generation of antipsychotic drugs had generally failed to do, and also relieved the positive symptoms of the illness (the thought abnormalities, hallucinations, delusions, and bizarre behavior). Earlier drugs had cleared up these positive symptoms to a greater or lesser extent, but often with unpleasant and sometimes irreversible side effects, such as involuntary and distorted muscle movements. Clozaril did not cause such side effects—another reason that it was pronounced a wonder drug.

Clozaril has one major drawback, however: it can cause agranulocytosis, a potentially fatal condition resulting from a major decline in the white-blood-cell count. Therefore, patients using it have to be given weekly blood tests. With this mandatory lab work, Clozaril cost about nine thousand dollars a year per patient when it was introduced.

Although Maxine initially shouted at Dr. Graham, "I don't want to take it!," she started taking Clozaril on September 15, 1991. Her white-blood-cell count remained satisfactory, even as Dr. Graham gradually increased the dosage until he found the correct level.

Dr. Graham's caseload is high, and he had not seen Maxine for more than two years when we spoke after her death, but he had no trouble remembering her. "I'd paint Maxine in bright colors and most other patients in gray," he said. "She was so fat, so noisy, so unhappy, she dressed in a bizarre fashion, and she was so grandiose." In Dr. Graham's opinion, Clozaril made Maxine more pleasant but only marginally better. When he reviewed her chart for me, he noted that in March of 1992 she was able to sustain her attention in arts and crafts for twenty minutes and to serve as the caller in bingo for ten minutes, "but she basically stayed in her own room and in her own world."

This time, Maxine stayed in Bellevue, a city hospital intended for short-term patients, for fifteen months—from May 3, 1991, until August 18, 1992, when she was released to Fountain House, one of the most highly regarded community programs in the country for discharged mental patients. The cost of her Bellevue stay was $381,625, paid for by Medicaid and Medicare. Trudy paid the rent on Maxine's apartment during the entire stay, in the hope that Maxine could progress through the Fountain House program back to her studio. Trudy kept in touch with the professionals who were caring for Maxine but often wished she had a sister who wasn't mentally ill, one with whom she could share her life. "When I was with friends, they would talk about their children and then they would say 'And how is Maxine?'—as if she were my child," she told me. "With Maxine, especially in her later years, I had all the negatives of having a child and none of the positives, none of the joys and the pride."

At Fountain House, Maxine refused to take Clozaril, and began assaulting the staff, consuming entire gallons of milk and jars of mayonnaise, and regressing to infantile behavior; she was brought back to Bellevue on September 2, 1992. Trudy and a Bellevue social worker had warned her that if she acted out at Fountain House she would end up in a state hospital. She hadn't believed them. On October 20, 1992, she was transferred to Rockland Psychiatric Center.

"Maxine was given a fair trial on a fair dose of Clozaril between September, 1991, and August, 1992," Dr. Graham told me. "It didn't work very well for her, although I think Clozaril helped her as much as any medication currently available could have, and I wish she had kept taking it." The drug has lived up to its promise for a significant number of others for whom it has been prescribed.

WHEN Trudy called to tell me Maxine had died at Rockland last November 17th, at the age of forty-six, I was stunned. Maxine was younger than I, and I had thought she would outlive me; and I had always prayed for a miracle—the discovery of a treatment in her lifetime that would make her well. It didn't come. Maxine collapsed in the middle of the night, and died of cardiac arrest brought on by acute internal bleeding from a bleeding ulcer.

Trudy Mason had first run for public office in 1985, as a candidate for City Council. She hadn't mentioned her schizophrenic sister then, still affected by her mother's mental-illness-is-a-*shanda* legacy. Trudy lost that race, but in 1991 she decided to run for the State Assembly. Trudy had become an advocate for the mentally ill, and, shortly before the race, she identified herself as the sister of a schizophrenic. A few days after Maxine's death, when I told Trudy that I wanted to write the last chapters of her story, she agreed, on one condition: that I write about Maxine Mason, not about Sylvia Frumkin. "The only way to take the stigma away from schizophrenia is to talk about it in public," she said.

Rockland State Hospital, where part of the movie "The Snake Pit" was filmed, in the late forties, opened in 1931. At its zenith, in 1955, its numerous buildings housed ninety-two hundred patients, many of them for years. There are now six hundred and seventy inpatients at Rockland Psychiatric Center (as it was officially renamed in 1975), and the average length of stay is sixty-five days.

As Trudy, who is currently working as a freelance public-relations consultant, and I drove to Rockland on Thursday, December 15, 1994—exactly four weeks after Maxine's death—I reminded her that Maxine had telephoned me only once during her two years there. I had been out when she called, so my husband had accepted her collect call, but all she could do was breathe hard and mumble a few unintelligible words.

Between 1992 and 1994, Trudy had thought it best that I and Maxine's other friends not visit.

Trudy is angry over Maxine's death. She is bitter that no bleeding ulcer was detected in a physical examination Maxine had been given only four weeks before. (Doctors at Rockland say that there was no indication of any problem then.) Trudy and her best friend, a psychiatric social worker, met at Rockland a few hours after Maxine's death. They say they were given inconsistent accounts of the precise circumstances of the death. Because Trudy isn't certain how long Maxine lay on a floor before she was found and a doctor and the paramedics were summoned, she has retained a law firm to file a notice of intention to file a wrongful-death and personal-injury claim against Rockland.

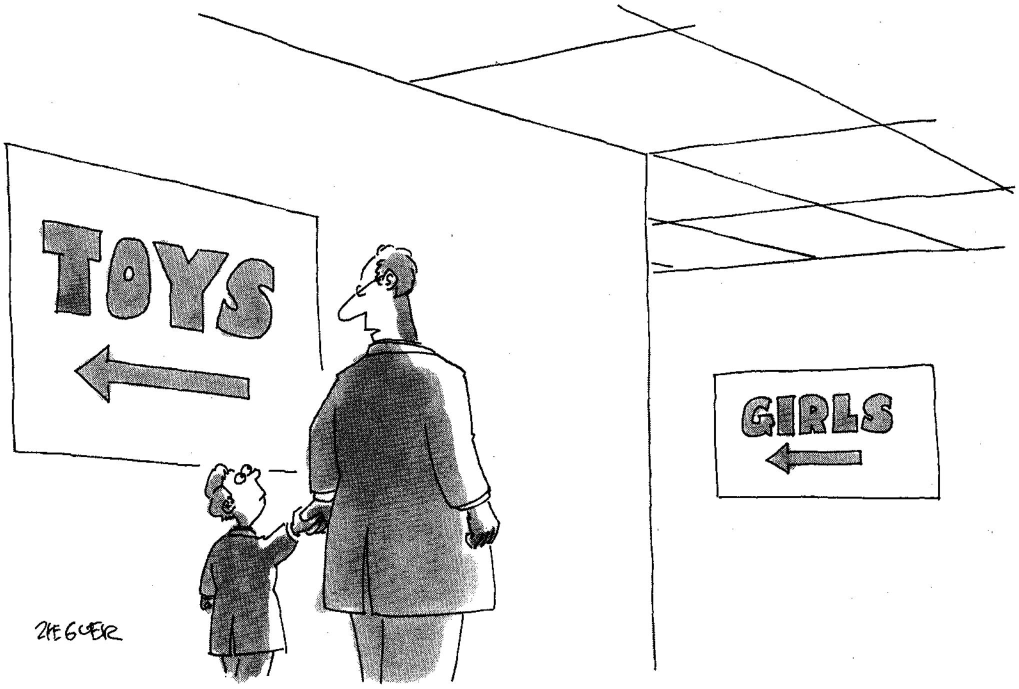
When we were admitted to Building 32, Ward 68, I was overwhelmed by the smell of urine and disinfectant. I hadn't smelled that smell since I last visited Maxine at Creedmoor, some fourteen years earlier. She had spent almost a year and a half at Rockland in the Admissions Unit before being transferred to this unit, for extended-care patients. The patients I saw sitting in the dayroom chairs as we entered appeared to range in age from their thirties to fifty-plus. They had one feature in common: their eyes were glazed. Maxine's vision was poor and she wore very thick lenses, but she often lost her glasses, and I recalled how pretty her blue eyes were, and how lively they looked even when she was quite ill.

Her last room, which she had shared with three other patients, was empty. I walked into it, took off my shoes, and lay down on the bed that had been hers. As soon as my head touched the pillow, I was again transported back in time to Creedmoor. The pillow was identical to the one that Maxine had used every night there. The first time I slept at Creedmoor, I couldn't believe how hard and uncomfortable the pillows were. I had taken off the white pillow slip then, and did so now, and saw a pillow cover made of the same stiff, poison-green-colored oilcloth. It costs an average of $100,400 to keep a patient at Rockland for a year, and yet, with all that money, there were no decent pillows.

The staff at Rockland was extremely courteous to us. I had brought along a few of my letters from Maxine—she was the only person who ever wrote letters to our cat, enclosing coupons for cat food and inquiring after Fearless Fosdick's well-being—and I let the staff read my favorite: the letter from May, 1986, in which she had hoped, in vain, to attend LaGuardia Community College. The letter ended with the words "SO, once again I close with a fond farewell. Take care and hope to hear from you soon. Love and all again, Maxine." The doctors, social workers, and treatment-team leaders all agreed that the person who was able to write such a letter had died long before Maxine.

It is a winter night in January. I am dressed in flannel pajamas and a flannel robe, wrapped in the afghan made especially for me by Maxine Mason, reading the two thousand pieces of paper that document the last twenty-five months of her life. The director of communications at Rockland gave me a photocopy of Maxine's entire 1992-94 record. It is a litany of Maxine hitting and being hit, of Maxine biting and being bitten, of pills she swallowed and refused to swallow, of injections given when she declined the pills. Of sabotaged diets: she arrived at Rockland weighing two hundred and forty-seven pounds and was put on a twelve-hundred-calorie diet, which she supplemented by snatching food from other patients' trays, counters, and the garbage. In the pages of her Rockland records, Maxine is all too often described as rebellious, disinclined to participate in group activities, inclined to tear things, including her clothes, and to traipse braless through the ward in an unbuttoned blouse. She calls therapy aides "niggers" and mumbles replies to voices only she can hear. She is frequently delusional, and her delusions are as grand as ever: "I'm a star," "I'm Dr. Mason," "I am the head Dr. on these grounds. Who are you to give me orders how to brush my teeth, Nurse?"

On these pages Maxine's soliloquies are described as "word salad." No Joycean monologues appear, because "the writer who is writing the story of my life" was not there to record them. I find a trace of my former presence on only a couple of pages—when Maxine is insisting that she is Sylvia Frumkin and someone is doubting her. At dawn, I wrap the afghan tighter, I pet Fosdick, I let the pages tumble to the floor. I am about to drift off to sleep, but not, Maxine, before I once again close with a fond farewell. ◆



"Come along, son. We are at but the beginning of a long and arduous journey."

ANNALS OF SHOWTOWN

TRAVOLTA'S SECOND ACT

Since "Pulp Fiction," Hollywood has again been clamoring for John Travolta, who is starring in Elmore Leonard's "Get Shorty." Everyone else is wondering what exactly Travolta did with his career the first time around.

BY MARTIN AMIS

HE opened the door himself—so you walked straight into the icon. This was the evening of January 18th, and that morning he had begun work on "Get Shorty," a major production (co-starring Gene Hackman and Danny DeVito) based on Elmore Leonard's satirical thriller about Hollywood. A big book, a big film, and a big day. Thus I was naturally expecting a big wait—or a cancellation; or a bodyguard and a body search and, eventually (maybe), a big entrance in some Spanish-style den infested with the star's "people" . . .

But no. Here was John Travolta removing my coat from my shoulders and personally sliding it onto a hanger, and turning to me with the close-set deep-blue eyes that remind you of the phrase "undivided attention." Actors' eyes don't blink unless the actor tells them to; and Travolta's eyes don't blink. For me, it was like stepping into a Warhol poster—a Mao, an Elvis. It was like bumping into James Dean or Jimi Hendrix. You feel that John Travolta is so iconic that he ought to be dead. And he isn't: not anymore.

In his early twenties, Travolta was, by many magnitudes, the biggest star on earth. Everyone wanted him in everything. "It could be a role for an eighty-year-old woman," his ex-girlfriend Marilu Henner has said, "and John would be offered it." By his mid-thirties, Travolta was simply a human vacuum, lost in Hollywood's interstellar void. (And *travolta*, we may be unsurprised to learn, means "overturned," "shook up," "knocked down.") Now he is forty, and his career has done something that the industry is hard put to find a vocabulary for. "Comeback" barely covers it. Forget "comeback." This product is flying direct from zero temperature to *dignity*.

What happened? The answer, of course, is "Pulp Fiction." Another, more general answer is Quentin Tarantino. Smoothly, Travolta guided me into a living room (this was a rented property in Beverly Hills, north of Sunset) and, his voice dropping to a whisper of gratitude, told me how it had gone—how "it was *all* Quentin." Or so it would now seem. Actually, even Quentin needed outside help. The latest phase in this inimitably American story also owes something to postmodernism—and to Scientology. How drunk was Scott Fitzgerald when he said that there were no second acts in American lives?

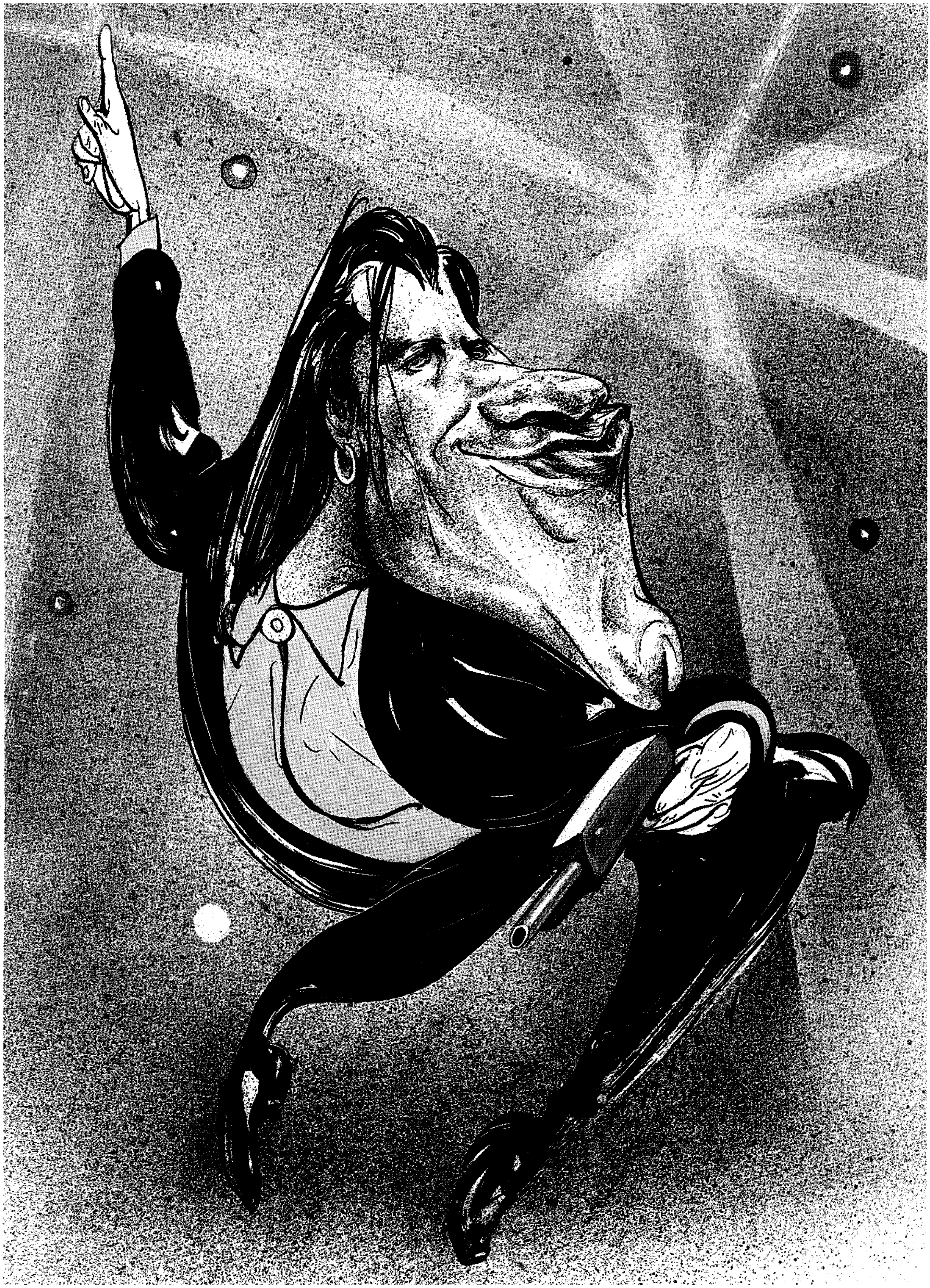
Two years ago almost to the day, John Travolta, apparently, had only one movie in prospect. "It was 'Look Who's Talking 3,' " he said, with some resignation (but with insufficient incredulity). That would be the one with the talking dogs. We can picture Travolta back then, in his twenty-room château, in Penobscot Bay, Maine, or in his second home, in the Spruce Creek Fly-In development, in Daytona Beach, Florida, or, indeed, en route between them, at the controls of one of his three airplanes, in actorly preparation for the dogs movie: thinking *dogs*. As it happens, he was unprecedentedly rich and fat and happy in his private life, with his wife, the actress Kelly Preston, and his newborn son, little Jett. But he was about to make a film about talking dogs. "I try to be realistic," he said, in his measured way. "You know: you can't dance without legs. I would continue to work with the best that was offered. But I did think, Well, it's all over." Then there came a succession of rumors that Quentin Tarantino, "the hottest guy in town," wanted a meeting with John Travolta, the frigid relic with the vanished career. The meeting happened, and it lasted twelve hours.

"It didn't look as though he had a project in mind. He had started writing 'Pulp Fiction,' but he kept talking about some horror movie. And I am not a horror kind of guy. His interest in me seemed to be . . . generic." The meeting began in Quentin's apartment—"which turned out to be *my* apartment," he went on. "The one I rented when I first came to L.A., in 1974." (Resolutely unflaky, Travolta didn't make too much of the coincidence.) They talked, they had a glass of wine, they went out to dinner, they came back and played Tarantino's movie-buff board games, they went out to a coffee shop, they came back again. "And then Quentin let me have it. He said, 'What did you *do*? Don't you remember what Pauline Kael said about you? What Truffaut said about you? Don't you know what you *mean* to the American cinema? John, what did you *do*?' I was hurt—but moved. He was telling me I'd had a promise like no one else's. I went out of there with my tail between my legs. I was devastated. I couldn't find the words. But I also thought, Jesus Christ, I must have been a fucking good actor."

By now, we were seated at his circular dining table, drinking wine. The rented house was comfortable and anonymous, but there was still the sense of the movie star's in-depth backup: helpers, minders. It has been said that Travolta is a millionaire who lives like a billionaire. Still, here in Hollywood everything is scaled down and streamlined for work—for "Get Shorty"—including the star himself. Although the energies of the house center on Travolta, there is now another power source, who is fitfully sleeping. Kelly Preston—tousled, pretty, petite—appeared. Next came an earnest discussion about the imminence of Jett's return to full consciousness. Soon afterward, Jett duly presented himself, in his mother's arms, looking crumpled and drunkenly applying himself to a bottle of juice. Many hugs and kisses and avowals. Jett's eyelashes are an inch long.

It occurred to me that Jett must be one of the most cosseted creatures on the en-

STEVE BRODNER



tire planet. In Maine, evidently, he has his own Wonderland wing, where servants approach him bearing plates of tempura shrimp. Children, when they come, know everybody sidewise, but movie stars, with their expanded selves, have further to shift. So they tend to whale: movie stars' children *really* live like movie stars. Can you imagine how nice the *help* are to Jett Travolta? Wouldn't *you* be nice to someone called Jett Travolta?

We talked about parenthood. Travolta was eager to speak, eager to listen. The grotesque vicissitudes of his career must seem more distant now; but it's always possible that his objectivity is long established and secure. Something he once said struck me, and I quoted it to him over the cheesecake: "You're assuming that a person is introverted and self-obsessed all the time . . . you feel bad. You feel a loss. But give a guy the benefit of not being *insane*."

TARANTINO'S question remains, and remains unanswered. What *did* Travolta *do*? To curl up with a VCR and the Collected Movies, 1976-93, is to witness a trajectory of scandalous decline. In the firmament, as elsewhere, the brightest stars have the shortest lives: blue giant to black hole. But the universe isn't old enough to encompass the degeneration that Travolta managed. It will take ten billennia for our sun to reach its ultimate state, frozen in crystalline undetectability. Travolta did it in ten years.

By 1980, John Travolta had made three movies that passed him straight into pop-cultural immortality. You can summon them in stills. First, in "Saturday Night Fever," the polystyrene erection under the disco strobes, in the kind of shirt that reduces your nipples to blobs of plasma, on bricklike high heels, pointing skyward. Next, in "Grease," the rocker with the cigarette in the corner of his knockout smile, the eyes mere slits of cliché cool. And then, in "Urban Cowboy," the proud, puzzled, romantically sculpted profile beneath the stiff rim of the shit-kicker hat. It is not just good looks and good lighting that give these images their durability. What we are seeing here is what the camera sees when it confronts a palpable charge of life. And in these films Travolta gives complete performances; they form a trilogy whose subject is masculine youth. In his thwarted frowns and glares, his tonguey cadences, his strutting uncertainty, in the italicizations of his forehead, Travolta contrives a mature commentary on what it is to be immature.

A MARTHA STEWART MOMENT IN APARTMENT 8-J
Suddenly, I feel like making beeswax candles!
R. Chast

Now comes the transitional "Blow Out" (1981), overdirected and miserably underwritten by Brian De Palma, who launched Travolta in "Carrie" in 1976 (and whose career curve would take the same kind of turn). A scarecrow of ragged illogicalities, spruced up by Hitchcock via Antonioni, "Blow Out" was nonetheless a logical choice for Travolta, now twenty-seven and ready, it seemed, to receive his Italian-American inheritance. Pauline Kael, writing in these pages, compared him to Brando in "On the Waterfront" ("It's the willingness to go emotionally naked and the control to do it in character"); and there was a more general expectation that he would soon fall under the sway of such directors as Francis Coppola and Martin Scorsese. Instead, he fell under the sway of Sylvester Stallone. What this entrained, in any event, was catastrophic collapse.

Travolta, loyally, has never seen it this way. The way he sees it, he was more or less naturally displaced by a new generation of stars: Hanks, Cruise, Costner. One wonders about the nature of the initial attraction: Stallone is an icon, too, of course. Rambo, that lethal trapezium of organ meat; Rocky, out jogging with his dog. Maybe even the dog thing goes all the way back to Sly. Dogs, at any rate, were what Travolta started starring in, exclusively, after 1982.

In the space of one year, he made the Stallone-directed "Fever" follow-up, "Staying Alive"—a charmlessly muscular salaam to body-building and the Big Time—plus "Two of a Kind," with Olivia Newton-John, a sort of wishful lube job on "Grease." "Two," one of the worst films ever made, opens in a celestial setting (clouds, white-smocked angels, a deep-voiced God off camera), and features Oliver Reed as the Devil. Can we fully imagine what kind of trouble a movie is in when it features Oliver Reed as the Devil? Oliver Reed in a ringmaster suit? Next came the thoroughly average "Perfect," which can be considered a local high point. Thereafter, Travolta was finding himself in the kind of films that

THE ANNIVERSARY

I'll walk the streets all day today
With my eyes closed.
I won't bring a white cane and a dog.
I won't carry a doomsday sign.
I won't cheat, I won't peek.

Women will march in protest on the avenue
With their breasts bared proudly.
It will feel like New Year's Eve.
It'll be like Halloween.
Everyone will be wearing a funny hat.
There'll be gorillas in the crowd.

I'll brush against thousands of solitudes,
Bowing and muttering my apologies.
There'll be missing children,
One or two murderers and their sweethearts.
Someone with onion on his breath
Will put a cold wristwatch against my ear.
It'll be like silent laughter.

The lines in the hand foretell the future;
The sore feet know the past.
Somewhere hereabouts I sold tropical fish.
I painted the ceilings in a funeral parlor.
I was an usher in a live sex show.

Ten minutes to closing time
In a matrimonial agency rarely frequented,
A bride will wait for me
Dressed in white lace like my grandmother.

At some construction site, fifty stories up,
I will step on a long beam
And go to the very tip of it,
My arms spread wide to steady myself
With the wind gusting off the river.

—Charles Simic

get exclamation marks added to their titles when they briskly appear in the rental stores. I refer to what Columbia Tristar Home Video calls "Look Who's Talking Now! (A Tom Ropelewski Film)." That was the talkie with dogs: simply an ad for the silent screen. And that was Travolta in 1993.

"The day Quentin finished 'Pulp Fiction,' he sent it to me," Travolta resumed. "He said, 'Look at Vincent.' " Tarantino had written the part for Travolta; he believed in Travolta—"but he was the only guy who was thinking that way. Which kind of shows you how my light had died. The studio wanted an actor with . . . a higher temperature. Quentin had much more to lose than I did. Finally, he said, 'You either do it with John Travolta or you don't do it.' "

Simultaneously—and ridiculously, it might seem—Tarantino was having to win over *Travolta*. "My doubts were not artistic doubts. They were moral doubts." We live in an age of mass suggestibility, the argument went. And in his earlier days, in the days of Tony and Danny and Bud, Travolta's performances had an uncontrollable effect: they caused crazes. What kind of role model was Vincent, with his hypodermic and his handgun? The reservation seems responsible, but it hardly seems appropriate, given Vincent's fate (studded with bullets, on a toilet seat). Given, too, the quality of Tarantino's writing. As with David Mamet—as with Elmore Leonard—the burnished heartlessness of the dialogue is always pointing beyond itself, to the moral world it carefully excludes. In one scene, Vincent goes to score a few grams of "madman" heroin from his dealer, Lance (the droll and Jesus-y Eric Stoltz):

Lance: Still got your Malibu?

Vincent: Oh man. You know what some fucker did the other day?

Lance: What?

Vincent: Fuckin keyed it?

Lance: Oh man. That's fucked up.

Vincent: Tell me about it. I had it in storage for three years. It was out five days and some dickless piece of shit fucked with it.

Lance (*weighing out the powder*): They should be fuckin killed, man. No trial, no jury. Straight to execution . . . What a fucker.

Vincent: What's more chickenshit than fucking with a man's automobile? I mean, *don't* fuck with another man's *v*ehicle.

Lance: You don't do it.

Vincent: It's against the rules.

(*Drugs and cash exchange hands.*)

Lance: Thank you.

Vincent: Thank *you*. Mind if I shoot up here?

It seems that by this stage in his career Travolta was almost incapable of accepting a good script—or of rejecting a bad one. He saw the irony of it even then. "I was saying to Quentin, 'No. I'll do 'Look Who's Talking 4' instead. In which the *chairs* talk.' " But when I asked him, the next day, about the long list of parts he had mistakenly turned down, Travolta mentioned "Arthur" and "Splash" before throwing in "Prince of the City" and "Midnight Express"—and blandly dismissed "An Officer and a Gentleman" and "American Gigolo."

The talk turned to "Get Shorty." (Travolta had just finished an interim project, "White Man's Burden," a drama about the racial divide, produced by Tarantino's stablemate Lawrence Bender.) I said what I believed to be true: that Elmore Leonard was perhaps the greatest popular writer of all time; that "Get Shorty" was a masterpiece; and that Travolta's mother (working closely with Travolta's agent) couldn't have come up with a better Travolta role than the one he was playing—that of Chili Palmer, the Miami loan shark with big ideas about making movies.

“I turned it down at first.”

“You what?”

“I turned it down. Then Quentin called”—Travolta’s voice became a wheedling whisper—“and said, ‘This is not the one you say no to. This is the one you say yes to. I’m not going to *let* you make this mistake.’ ”

“You’ve lost weight for Chili, I see.”

“That was Quentin, too. He said lose about fifteen pounds. I lost *exactly* fifteen pounds.”

WHILE writing “Pulp Fiction,” Tarantino must have instinctively grasped that Travolta could never “come back” in any conventional sense. The rebirth had to be a revamp, and a kind of travesty. Accordingly, the physically graceful but emotionally gawky American calf—Tony/Danny/Bud—was obliged to reappear as a corrupt and jowly ruin. This is why the dance scene with Uma Thurman is central: it is a postmodern coup de théâtre. The audience colludes. Every moviegoer knows what Travolta can do on a dance floor. Watching his drugged gyrations is like watching the aged Picasso drawing a stick man. “Stephanie, I want to ask you something, all right?” pleads Tony Manero, in “Saturday Night Fever.” “Do you think that I am either interesting or intelligent?” Tarantino provides the heartless—and contemporary—destination for that old American quest. All that Vincent knows, after three years in Europe, is how to order a Big Mac in French.

Yet Tarantino’s simpler aim was just to get Travolta in front of the camera with some lines worth saying. And we find that the talent was always there, unimpaired and entire: concentration, timing, fluidity, and wit. In his preparations for the part, Travolta mingled not with Mob executioners but with heroin addicts. There he found a fear of full consciousness—a fear of the intelligence that Tony/Danny/Bud liked to hope would be waiting for him. From then on, with Vincent, it is all in a twitch, a roll of the dead eyes.

“Pauline Kael said you had the ‘gift of transparency.’ What do you think she meant by that?”

“It doesn’t take much for a thought to be seen. I keep having to talk directors out of talking me into overacting. I say, ‘You won’t see it on the set. You’ll see it in the editing room.’ ” And he adds, with an emphasis quieter than the italics I give it, “I have an ability to be it, and *it will read.*”

“GET SHORTY” has a beautiful premise. If Hollywood is full of cheats, liars, hustlers, and double-crossers—if movies are made by crooks—then why can’t a *crook* make a movie? Chili Palmer, ex-wise guy and general Mob hard-on, a shylock who gives loans at a hundred and fifty per cent, chases a debt to Hollywood and sticks around. The business practices look pretty familiar, though even Chili can sense subtleties he has yet to master:

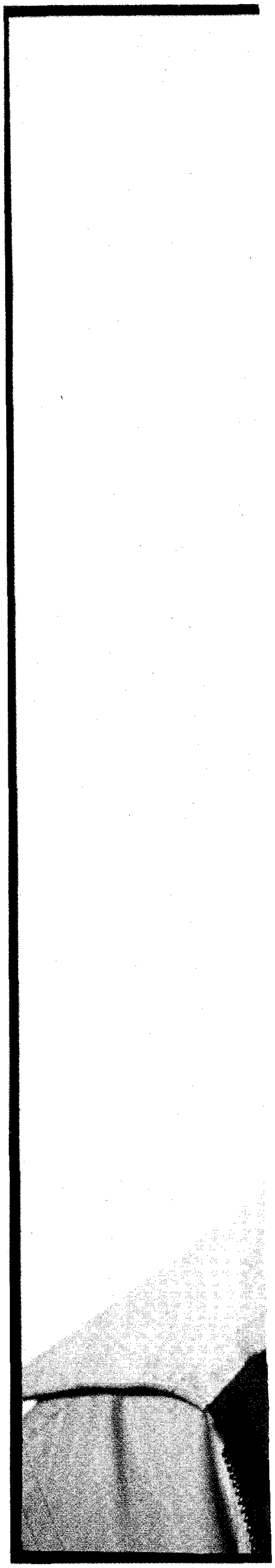
> Other things to remember: you don’t “take a meeting” anymore, you say you have “a two-thirty at Tower.” If a studio passes on a script, you don’t say “they took a Pasadena.” That was out before it was in. Like “so-and-so gives good phone.” . . . There were a lot of terms you had to learn, as opposed to the shylock business where all you had to know how to say was “Give me the fuckin money.”

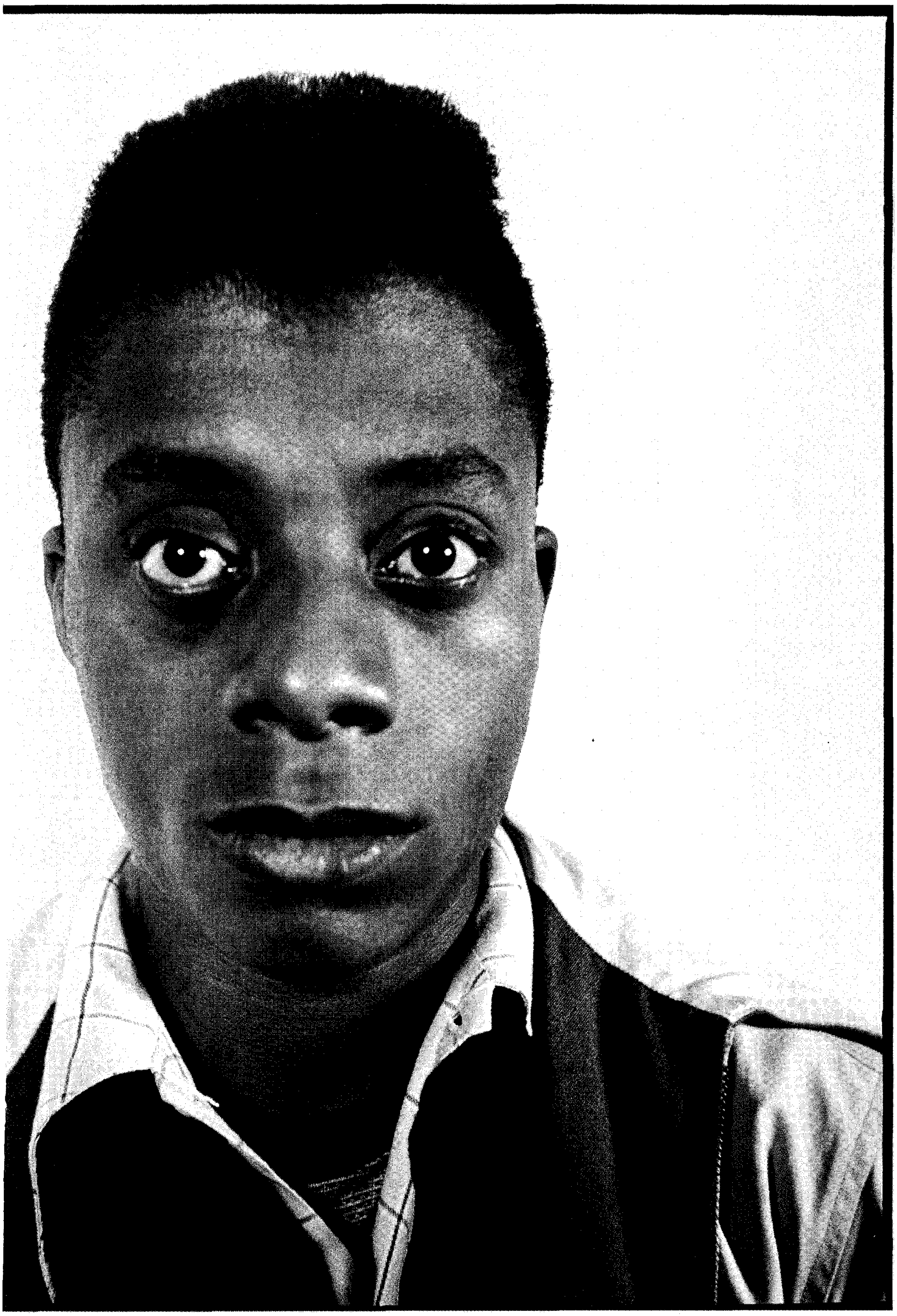
On most movie sets, the visiting journalist hangs around for thirteen hours and then, when the cameras are finally rolling, watches an extra tying his shoelace. But

JAMES BALDWIN

In 1962, The New Yorker published an essay by James Baldwin that put the author’s—and the magazine’s—gentle, humane intelligence to its ultimate test. Subsequently republished as “The Fire Next Time,” the essay told the magazine’s white readers what it was like to be a black man. At times, the modulated voice of sweet reason failed to conceal a rage so profound that it was terrifying: “The American Negro has the great advantage of having never believed that collection of myths to which white Americans cling: that their ancestors were all freedom-loving heroes, that they were born in the greatest country the world has ever seen, or that Americans are invincible in battle and wise in peace, that Americans have always dealt honorably with Mexicans and Indians and all other neighbors or inferiors, that American men are the world’s most direct and virile, that American women are pure.” Baldwin’s greatest piece of writing had found its audience.

Photograph by Richard Avedon
New York City, 1945.





Travolta was as obliging as ever. I arrived at the multistory parking lot at LAX in time to watch several takes of a funny, dramatic, and salient action sequence during which Chili Palmer taunts, works over, and finally befriends a menacing lunk (and ex-stuntman) called the Bear. Travolta was wearing silks and loafers (what he calls "a street guy's idea of *GQ*") and a pitying sneer, recalling Jack Nicholson in "Chinatown"—the sneer that says "You're even dumber than you think I think you are." The two actors rehearse. A kick, a punch, a knee in the face, and the Bear goes down. Chili crouches over him and says, "How many movies you been in?"

"About sixty."

"No shit. What're some of them?"

" 'Saturday Night Fever,' " ad libs the Bear.

Travolta is candidly regal on the set. He is a prince mingling with his subjects. Wearing the high finish (and light makeup) of intransigent stardom, he triggers hysteria wherever he goes. ("I've walked down the street with some big stars, O.K.?" Tarantino has said. "I cannot walk *two feet* down the street with John Travolta. People stop their cars. People are clawing all over him.") The day before, a production assistant warned the extras that they would be fired if they asked for more autographs. "No, no. You will *not* be fired," Travolta said, and continued signing. Today, on my arrival, Travolta veers off to secure me a cappuccino, confronting a flock of paparazzi; and then I sit beside him (while the makeup woman copes with some subatomic blemish) on a director's chair. Wait: not a director's chair. *The* director's chair.

"Why is it that you seem to be the people's star? It sure as hell isn't your life style. They love you as if you still lived with your brothers and sisters in Englewood, New Jersey."

"It works the other way. You know: quintessentially American, living out your dreams. They don't *want* you to be humble."

Twenty minutes later, I learn something—something entirely ludicrous—about not being humble. In his public dealings, Travolta is polite, considerate, even courtly. But he doesn't make the mistake of the movie star in "Get Shorty," who, in Chili's view, "wanted people to think he was a regular guy, but was too used to being who he was to pull it off." You cannot combine being a movie star with being a regular guy. You cannot combine being a movie star with *not* being a movie star.

A chauffeur-driven car appears. I assume that we are going to be chauffeured to the Travolta trailer (saving ourselves a three-minute stroll). It turns out that we are going to be chauffeured to the *elevator*, which is a hundred and fifty yards away. En route, we pass the Bear. Travolta asks the driver to stop and winds down his electric window. Gently and, I think, unironically, he asks this powerhouse if he "wants a ride." The Bear says it's O.K.: he's good. We reach the end of our journey and climb out. As the elevator pauses, we are joined by a couple of members of the crew. And by the Bear.

"JOHN," I tell him, "you've put me in a terrible position." By making things easy for me, Travolta has made things hard for me. For two decades, on and off, I have been interviewing famous people. And I have to confess that I have never interviewed anyone as generous as Travolta: generous with his time, his trouble, his attentiveness. When I came to Los Angeles to interview Brian De Palma, years ago, things went rather differently. I arrived on the set, as arranged—and he cancelled. This was what Hollywood was *supposed* to be like. I was delighted. The piece wrote itself. "A journalist," I tell him, "doesn't want to discover that John Travolta is a nice guy." A journalist wants to discover that John Travolta is an egomaniac in a black robe. "What kind of story is *that*?"

"What gets written about me is one of the things I can't control. So I thought I'd just put a lot into it from my end and see what happened."

Was this postmodernism? "Control": was this Scientology? We had tackled Scientology the night before, during our second dinner. As interpreted by John Travolta, at least, Scientology came across as stolidly, even boringly, uncreepy: self-management on a buddy network, with an emphasis on communal therapy (but with full reliance on modern medicine). Some people are drawn to religion—and a religion is what Scientology now is, officially, tax-deductably—not in a search for God but because they like group systems. If we read Nirad Chaudhuri we find that Hinduism, for instance, is worldly: Do right by that cow, and you will get one over on your neighbor. But Scientology is *worldly*. It teaches you how to pay the rent and not go crazy. "Without it," Travolta said, "I wouldn't have lived any longer than John Belushi." Well, whatever works. The old if-it-ain't-broke catchphrase can be improved upon for Travolta by something even older: You dance with who brung you.

The star's trailer is a luxurious version of Bud's mobile home in "Urban Cowboy": plush carpet, microwave, VCR. There is pizza, there is iced tea. Duly prompted, Travolta tells the story about making an emergency landing in his Gulfstream at Washington's National Airport with his wife and child on board.

"I had the equivalent of seven failures—contagious failures." The talk turns technical: his "transducer rectifier" wasn't functioning. "I claimed an Emergency over the radio. And then *everything* went. I had one gyro. No flaps. No reverse thrust. When I fly, I find great objectivity up there. And I found I was calm. In flying school, they give you what they call a black cockpit. So I felt I'd been there before."

This story sounds to me like a pretty good figure for Travolta's career. The steep takeoff, the high altitude, the contagious failures, the black cockpit, the troubled but eventually triumphant landing. Nonchalantly, Travolta now reveals that he has just been offered eight million dollars (twice his current rate) to star in a movie with Sharon Stone—"That was an hour ago." Sharon Stone? Here in Hollywood, there are two directions you can disappear in. My protective instincts are stirred. Tony and Danny and Bud all longed for guidance. The baffled sweetness of the young Travolta's smile I take to be real, and durable. He is also a terrifying achiever who has learned to be calm. But he does need guidance; he does need his transducer rectifier. By now, of course, I am ready to offer my mentorship to John—my words of advice. Instead, I will offer them to Quentin Tarantino. All will be well. But don't let Travolta out of your sight. ♦

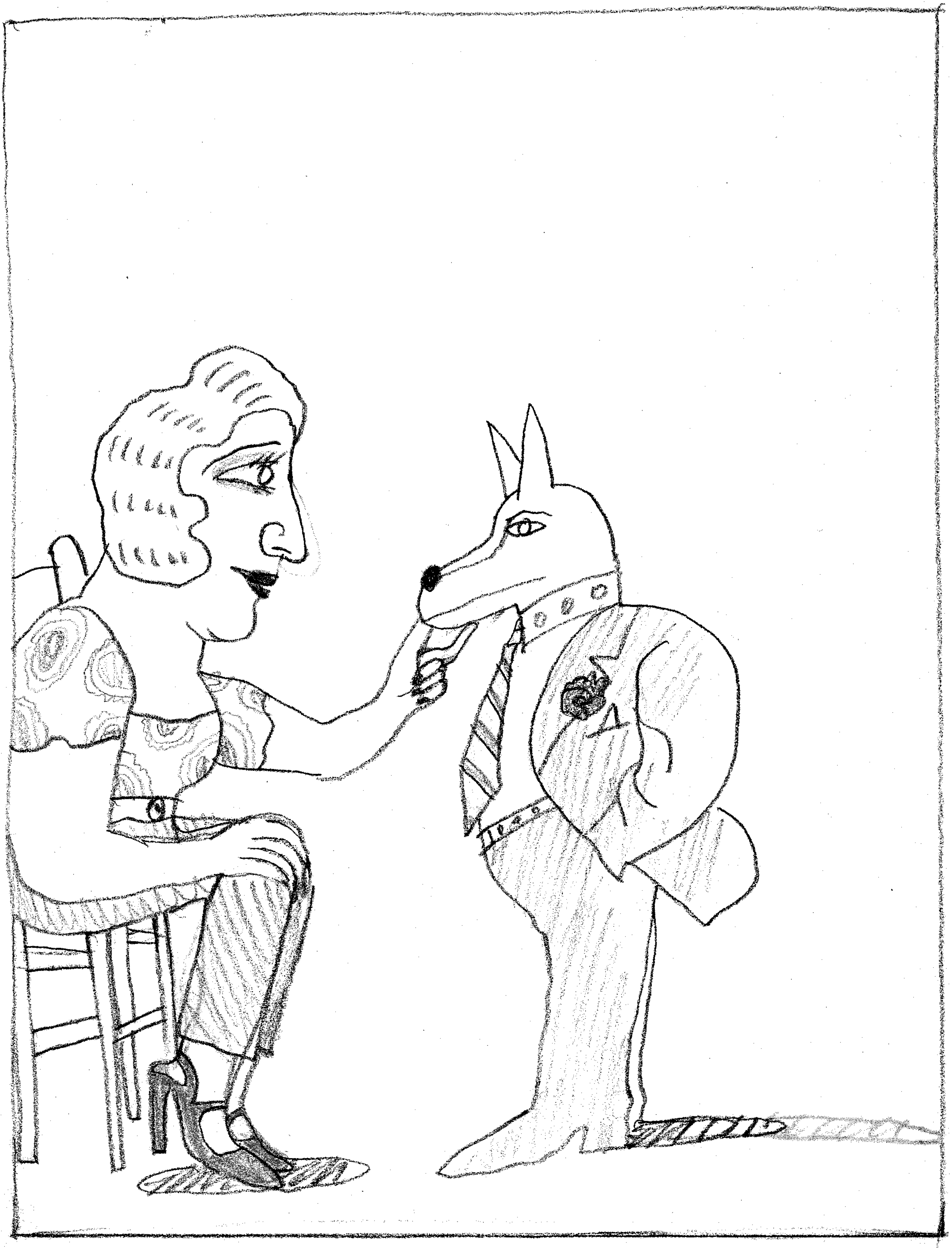
INTERIOR DESIGN NOTES FROM ALL OVER

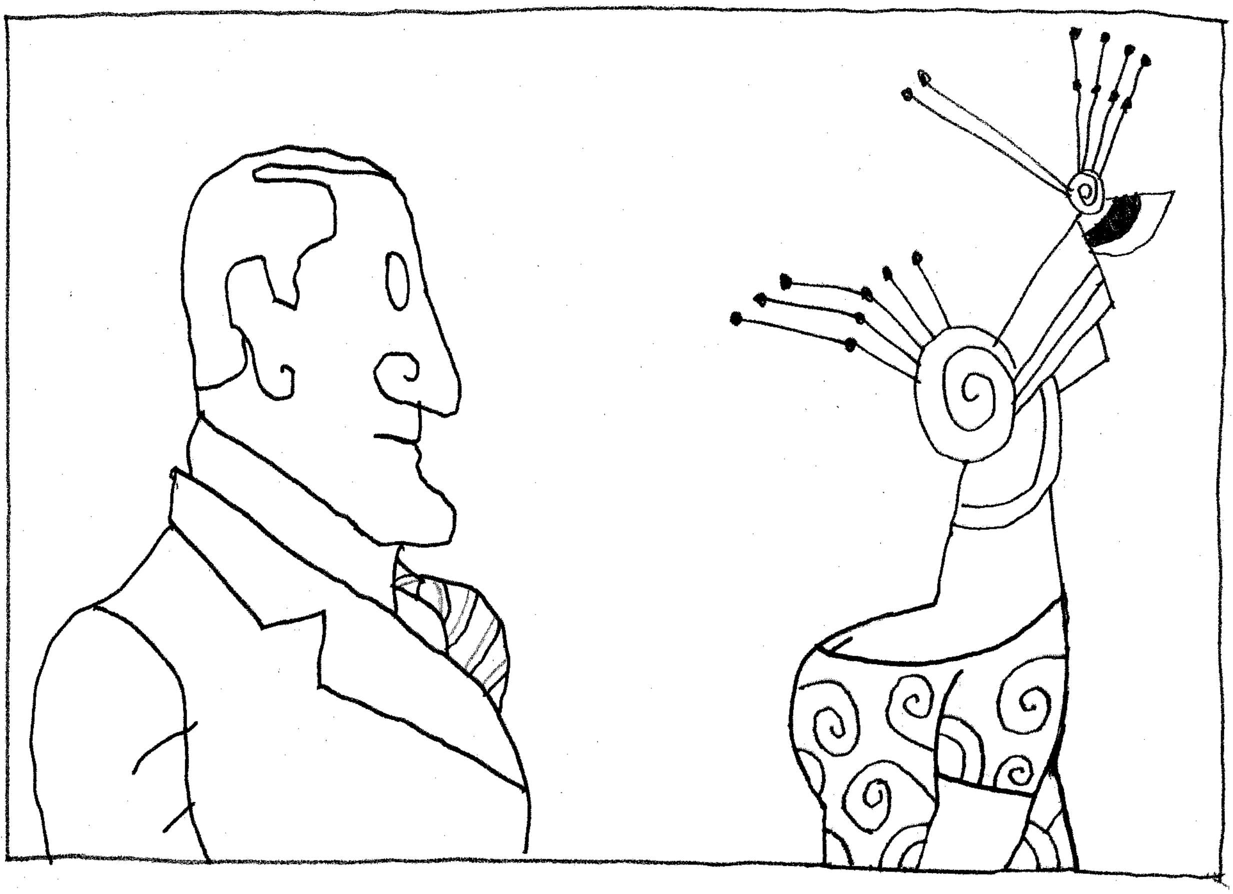
[*From the Jacksonville* (*Fla.*) *Florida Times-Union*]

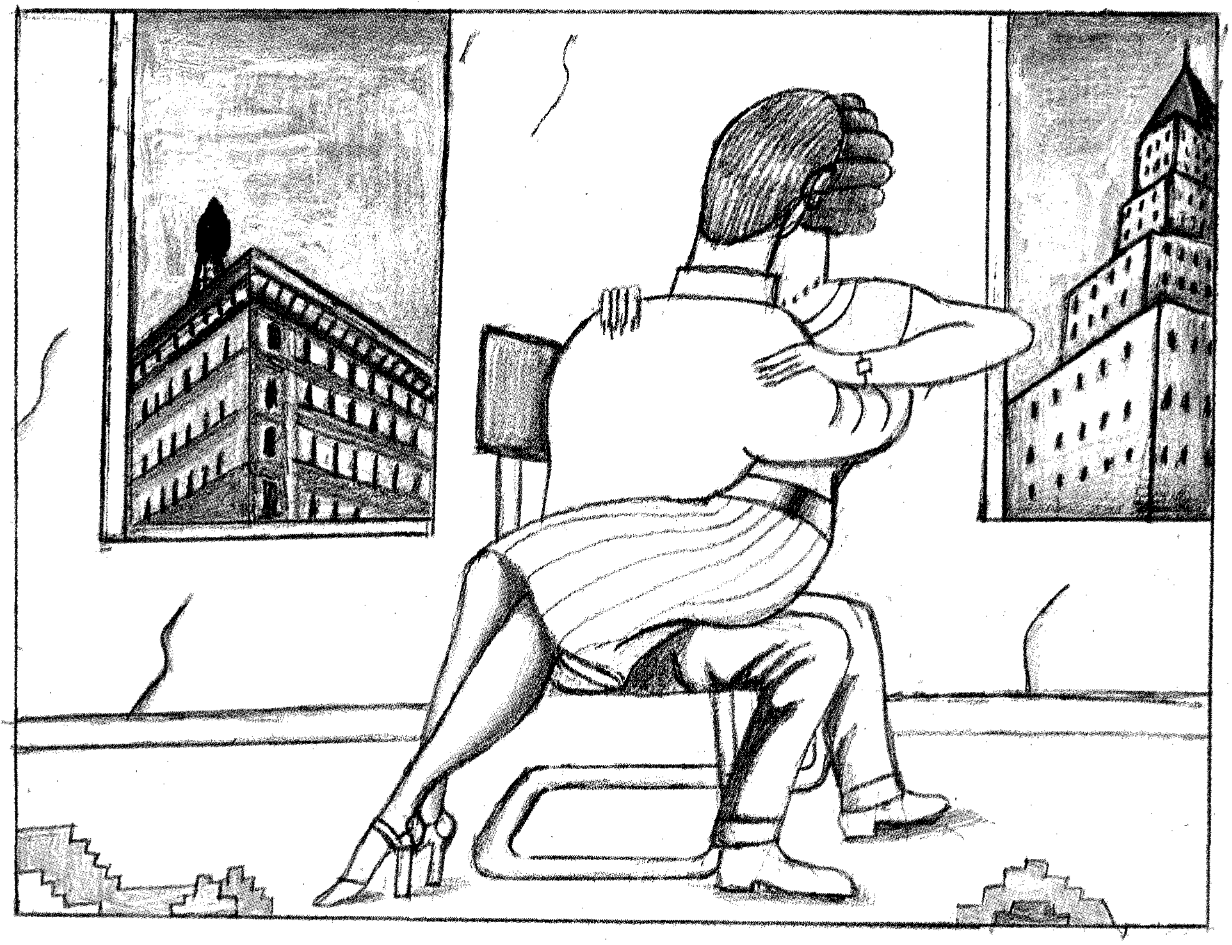
Books: These are great to fill empty wall units. Designers keep stacks of these on reserve for this purpose. Watch for sales sponsored by local libraries that need to clear stacks for new books. The covers of the books can relate to the color scheme of the room. Books also look nice stacked on a coffee table.

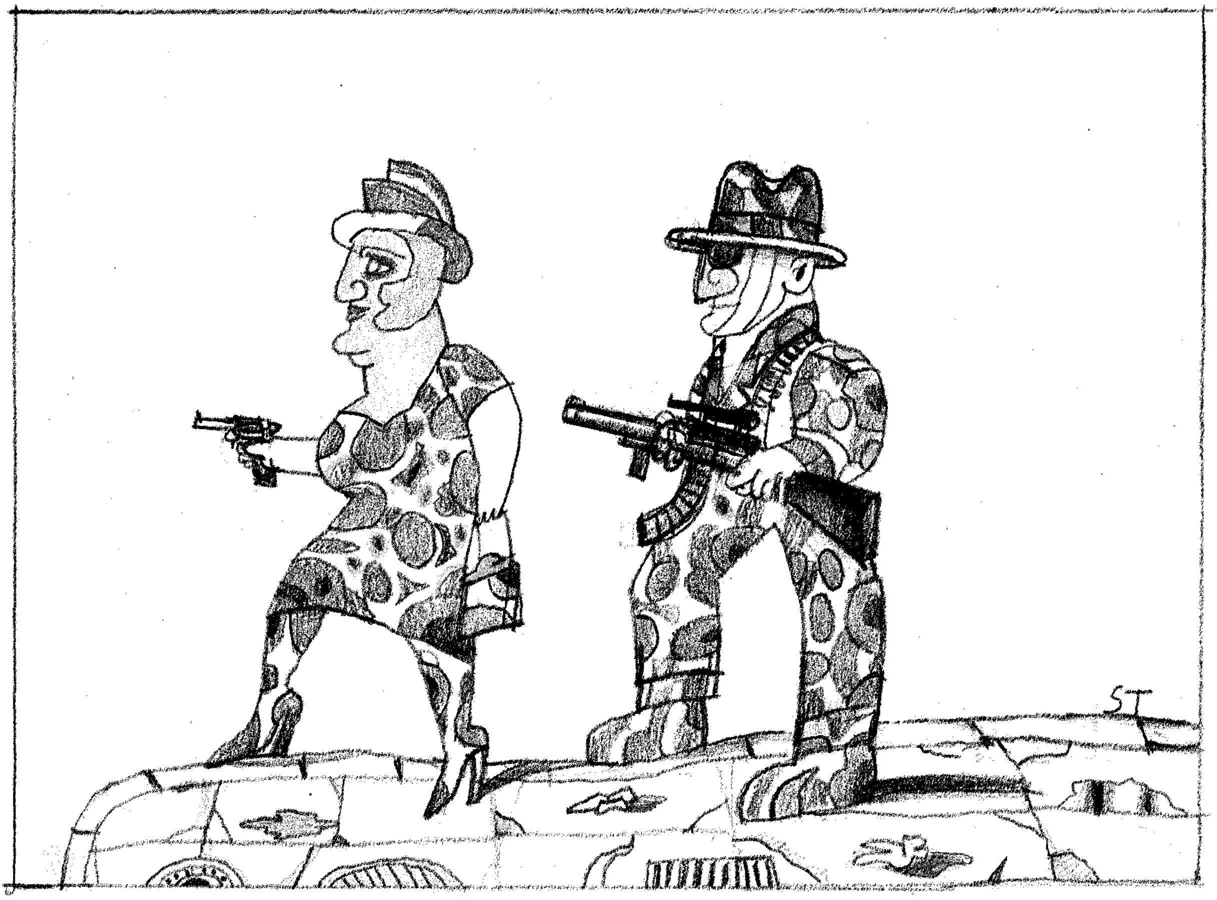
COUPLES

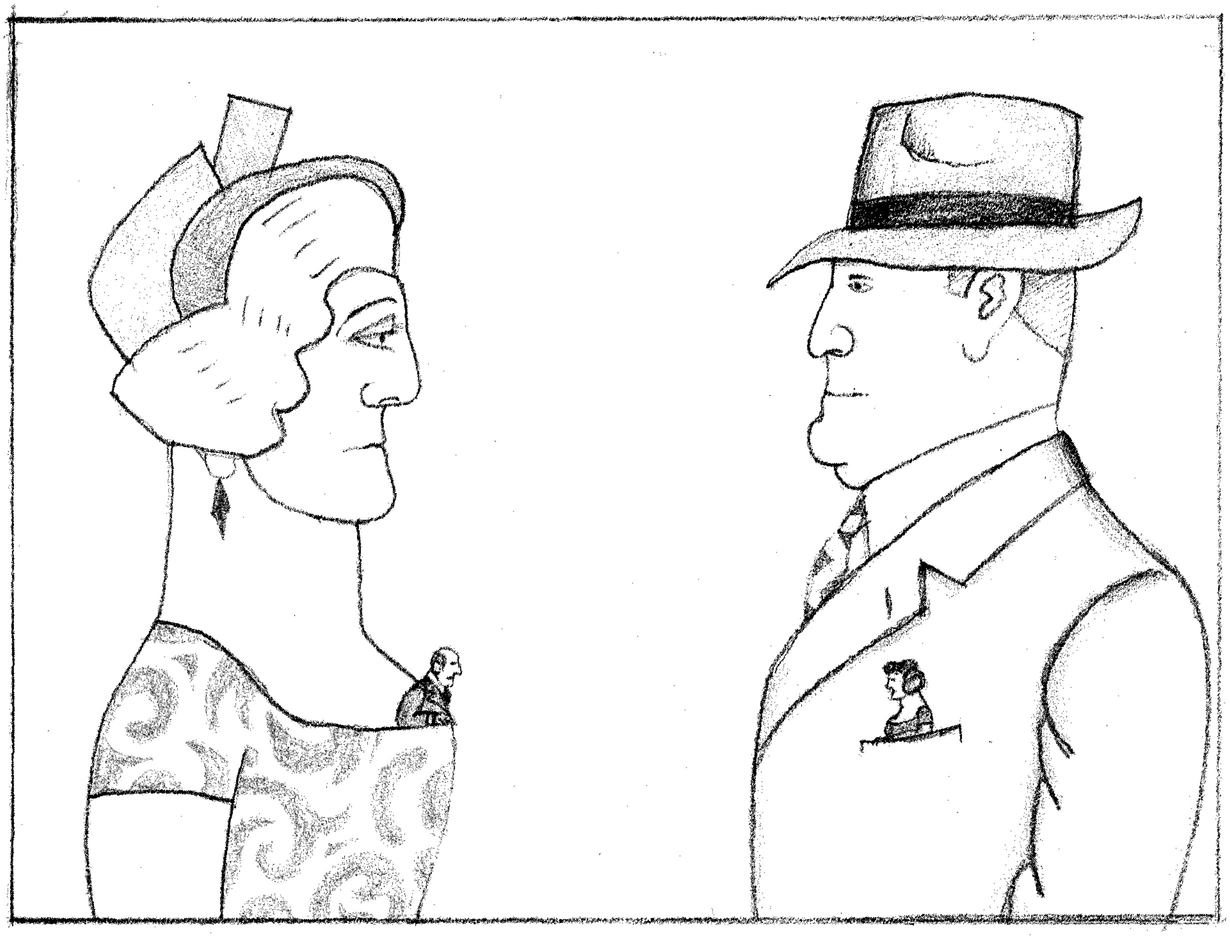
BY SAUL STEINBERG











PERSONAL HISTORY

THE SPINACH KING

At a Seabrook Farms reunion, confronting painful family histories became a shared experience for the descendants of Japanese war internees and the heirs of C. F. Seabrook—"the Henry Ford of agriculture," and the author's grandfather.

BY JOHN SEABROOK

THE town of Seabrook is in a part of South Jersey that almost no one visits, because there's no obvious reason to go there and it's not on the way to anywhere else. Even people who grew up in New Jersey have no clue what I'm talking about when I try to describe where Seabrook is—thirty miles south of Cherry Hill, across the state from Atlantic City, in the cul-de-sac that dead-ends into the Delaware Bay. Although Seabrook is only an hour's drive from Philadelphia, and two and a half hours from Washington and New York, it is surrounded by vegetable fields, and you can drive east for forty miles without seeing a mall or a Levittown. Road signs are perforated with bullet holes, and there are long snakes of tire rubber burned onto the road. The earth is chestnut-colored and looks comfortably worn. The fields drain into tidal creeks—pronounced "cricks" by the locals—which flow into salt marshes and on into the bay.

C.F. and Norma celebrating their fiftieth wedding anniversary with their children, Belford, Jack, Courtney, and Thelma, in 1955.

The Japanese American Citizens League held a fiftieth-anniversary celebration in Seabrook last October. About six hundred Japanese Americans attended the weekend—most of them former residents of Seabrook, about half of whom still live nearby. Between 1944 and 1947, twenty-five hundred people of Japanese ancestry came to Seabrook from the internment camps around the country where they had been corralled by the United States government after Pearl Harbor. They were recruited by my grandfather Charles Franklin Seabrook—known as C.F.—who was the head of Seabrook Farms, which by the nineteen-fifties was one of the largest producers of frozen vegetables in the country. My grandfather's basic idea, which was to apply factory methods to agriculture, required a lot of labor. In the early twenties, he published a message in a local paper, which read:

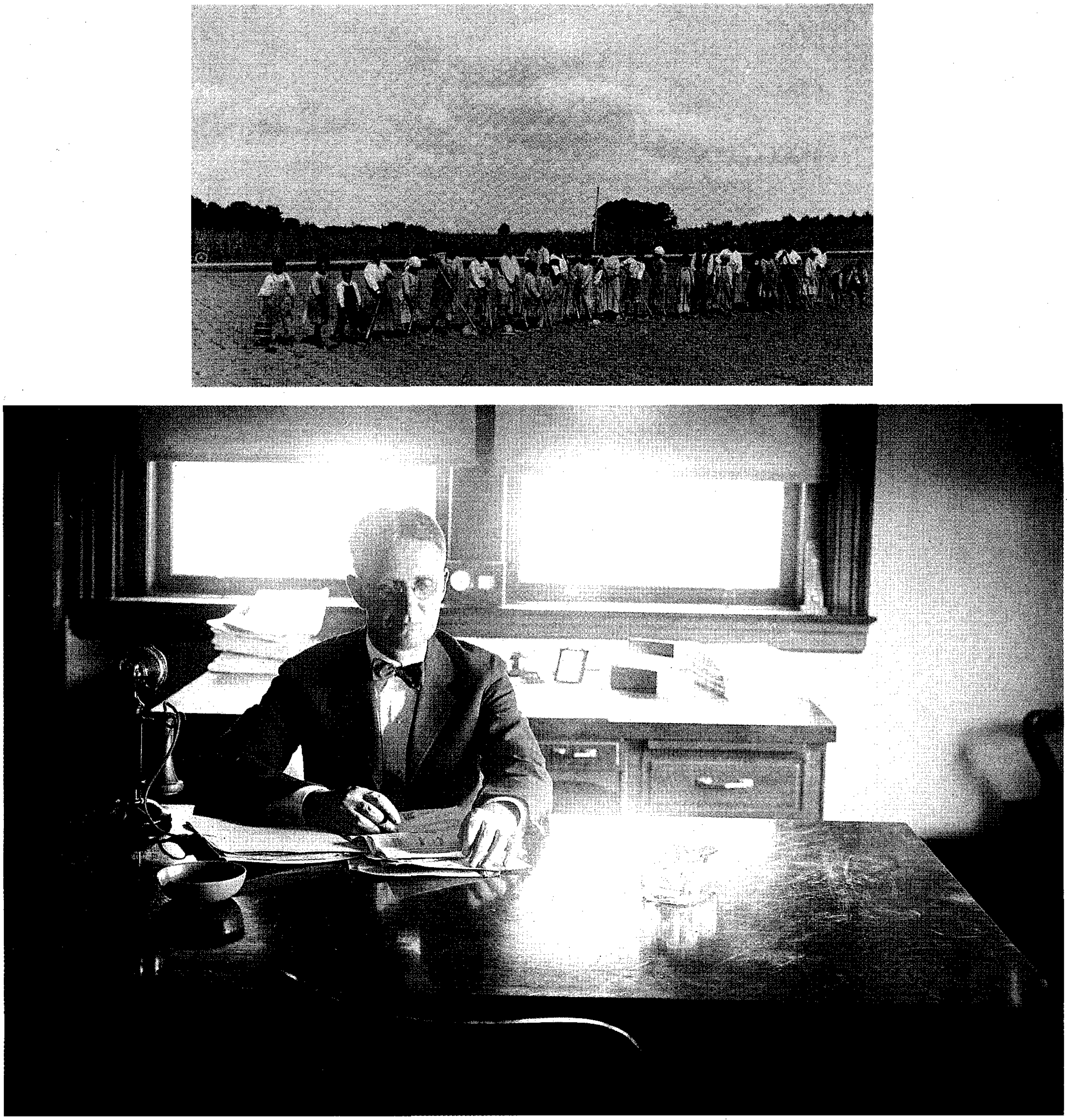
> Wanted!
>
> Some people who are mad enough to desire a quiet, comfortable home with modern conveniences, in the country, and a chance to save money, rather than high wages with dirt, noise and uncertain employment. The place has nothing to recommend it except good treatment, healthful living, steady position, and an opportunity for everybody to work their way up in a new and growing business.
>
> No sulkers or people with touchy feelings need apply. Anyone who says that he can get a job from "So and So" any time he wants had better take it. It is better than this one. Our regular work day is a ten-hour day. However, the work consists in doing whatever the employer feels like asking at any minute of the day or night.

Many of the workers at Seabrook Farms were refugees of twentieth-century upheavals and hardships: Italians avoiding their war with Turkey in the nineteen-tens; former soldiers of the White Russian Army in the late teens and early twenties; Americans who lost their jobs during the Depression; Jamaicans and Barbadians and German prisoners of war in the forties; Poles, Hungarians, and Czechs fleeing the advance of the Soviet Army in 1945; Japanese Americans from '44 to '47; and Estonians and Latvians running from Stalin's rule in the late forties and early fifties. My grandfather built "ethnic villages" for the different groups, and this collection of villages became Seabrook. In the nineteen-forties and fifties, there were thirty different languages spoken in Seabrook, a town of about five thousand people.

I DROVE down to Seabrook for the anniversary, too. I went partly out of curiosity about my family history, and partly out of a dim sense of obligation. My wife, Lisa, and I took the Turnpike to my parents' house on Friday evening, and the next morning we drove over to Seabrook in two cars: Lisa and I with my sister Carol and her family; my mom and dad in Dad's car. It was a perfect Indian-summer day, too warm for the suit I had worn for the occasion.

When I was little, going to Seabrook gave me a stomach ache. In Seabrook, something bad had hap-

CONNELLY-MOY; OPPOSITE: COURTESY SEABROOK EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL CENTER



"The biggest vegetable factory on earth," from top: field-workers in the twenties; C.F. in his Bridgeton office; the concrete-block housing units built for Japanese employees in the forties; loaders in the cold-storage warehouse; a man who had owned his own farm in California grades lima beans.

pened between my grandfather and my father, and it resulted in a kind of family apocalypse that destroyed Seabrook Farms. The mystery of what went wrong in my family has become part of the landscape around Seabrook; it seems to linger in the orange lanes leading back into the stunted pines, and in the sun glittering on the spinach fields beside the road. The whole place feels haunted to me. As we got closer to town, conversation in our car slowed down, and the wind and the sound of the engine filled up the silences. We turned onto Route 77, a sturdy concrete road that C.F. built in 1921, on which he transported vegetables to Camden. We passed the Seabrook Buddhist Temple and went through an alley of plane trees, planted by my grandfather, which are big now and give the road a stately appearance, like a country road in Provence. The trees were the only obvious sign that something momentous had once happened here.

Today, Seabrook has the forlorn look of a company town without the company. The local grocery store no longer carries a large selection of Japanese food, although it's probably the only place along N.J. 77 where you can buy roasted wasabi nuts. In the center of Seabrook is a huge empty space: the former site of the power plant, a four-story brick building with a tremendous two-hundred-and-twenty-five-foot phallus of a smokestack, which was torn down in 1979. It's as if the empty land that my grandfather filled with energy, machines, buildings, and people had been distilled into an essence, and the essence had been poured right here.

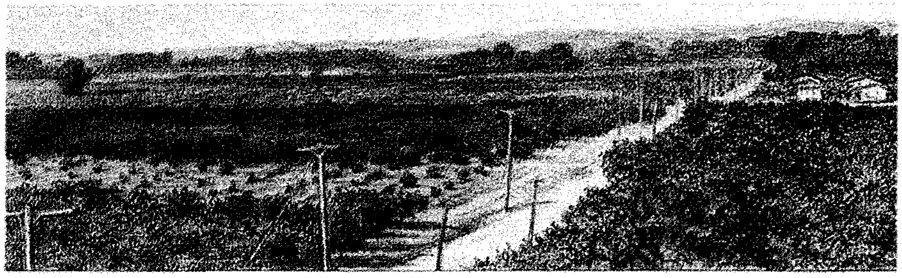
The entrance to the Seabrook School auditorium was crowded with people registering for the weekend. Most of the crowd was nisei and sansei—second- and third-generation Japanese American people, now mostly middle-aged, who were children at Seabrook, went away to college, and never really came back. There was a smaller number of issei, or first-generation Japanese, including ninety-six-year-old Fuju Hironaki Sasaki, who had been "mayor" of the Japanese community in Seabrook, and a few yonsei—fourth-generation—as well. We picked up our Seabrook Fiftieth Year Celebration tote bags and were shown to our seats, in a row near the front that was set off by a yellow ribbon. I nodded down the row to my father's brother Courtney, who is eighty-six, and to various cousins. The aisles were filled with people embracing each other. In front of me was a woman's face, squeezed over another woman's shoulder, tears overflowing her tightly shut eyes.

The anniversary began with a percussive blast from the Seabrook Hoh Daiko Drummers, who perform each summer in Seabrook for the Buddhist festival of Obon, a festival honoring the dead. (Legend has it that a disciple of Buddha had visions of his mother in Hell; by doing charitable deeds, he was able to attain forgiveness for her. The drumming announces her redemption.) Then the master of ceremonies, Ed Nakawatase, said, "I'm a former resident of Dormitory 8, Apartment 10, 819 Barnard Street, and I'd like to say to all of you, Welcome home." The local Boy Scout troop led the crowd in the Pledge of Allegiance to one nation under God indivisible with liberty and justice for all. The Reverend William Borror, pastor of the Deerfield Presbyterian Church, which was my grandfather's church (his employees called it "St. Charles' Cathedral"), stepped forward and said a blessing: "We thank you that you are a God of mercy and that you are a God of justice, and that your purposes are worked out in time and in the lives of those who seek to do your good."

CHILDREN of Japanese internees often speak of the difficulty of getting their parents to talk about their wartime experience. The younger generation want to know what happened in the camps, so they can pass along this almost Biblical event in the family history to their children; the older generation don't want to talk about it, because the pain of the experience is still too alive. When members of the younger generation ask their parents about the camps, they often hear the phrase *shikataganai*, a Japanese bit of stoicism that translates as "It couldn't be helped." Richard Ikeda, who was at Seabrook as a boy and is now a physical chemist at DuPont, across the river, told me that *shikataganai* is a way of saying, "O.K., life is unfair. Now get back to work." Josie Ikeda, Richard's mother and a longtime Seabrook resident, says that parents downplayed the terrible experience of the camps, partly in order to protect the children. "When we were in camp," she told me, "I was very bitter, fighting everything, but then I became concerned that my bitterness would pass to my children, and so I tried to change my attitude. I did not want them to grow up feeling bitter toward their country. I wanted them to love their country." Theodora Yoshikami, the coördinator of multicultural programs at the American Museum of Natural History, in New York, who was born in camp and spent most of the first twelve years of her life in Seabrook, told me, "You could never talk about the camps with my parents. I never knew what went on. Until I was nine, I thought when people said 'camp' they meant summer camp."

Events like the anniversary and the camp reunions are often arranged by the younger generation, to help the older people talk about their wartime experience. Many of the kids go to the reunions with their parents, in the hope of seeing through a rarely opened window onto the family past. The younger nisei and sansei tend to be more militant in their attitude toward the camp experience than the older people. The camp exhibit currently at the Los Angeles Japanese American National Museum, for example, which includes a reconstructed barracks, would have been unthinkable twenty-five years ago. The sansei were the force behind the Redress Movement, which led to the creation of a federal commission to study the internment policy, and which concluded, in 1983, that "the broad historical causes which shaped these decisions were race prejudice, war hysteria, and a failure of political leadership." In 1990, the federal government began awarding every surviving internee twenty thousand dollars.

After the prayer, the mayor of Upper Deerfield Township, C. Kenneth Hill, talked about being the son of migrant laborers who came from Tennessee to work at Seabrook in 1947. Donna Pearson, forty-one, who is the head of the Bridgeton City Council, also spoke. Her father, Samah Pearson, came from Jamaica in 1943, and went to work in the Seabrook bean fields. "We grew up in a multicultural household," Pearson said. "We learned to speak patois. Some of my first gifts were from Japanese Americans and German-Americans. . . . We have to remember the reasons for coming here weren't always the best. There was a lot of pain, there was a lot of suffering, there was a lot of loss, but I think the biggest lesson is that people survive. We come together, and we learn how to live together." Pearson paused to collect her emotions, then continued, "There's no obstacle you can't get over. There's no excuse for can't. There is always more in life to do and to achieve. Because if my parents could do it, so can I." ♦



BUILDING A DREAM

The rewards of hard work and opportunity were personified by C.F., whom everyone called "the Old Man," even before he was forty.

A HUNDRED and thirty years ago, my great-great-grandfather Samuel Seabrook, who had been the caretaker of Horace Greeley's estate, in Chappaqua, New York, brought his family down to New Jersey to live, ignoring his boss's advice to go west. His son Arthur became a sharecropper and sold vegetables door to door from the back of a huckster wagon. In those days, the word "truck" still meant "commercial produce," and New Jersey supplied most of the truck for Philadelphia and New York. In 1893, Arthur bought a fifty-seven-acre farm, partly covering the site now occupied by Seabrook. He worked it with his son—my grandfather. C.F. was small and thin and very serious. His pale-blue eyes, behind steel-rimmed spectacles, could appear icy. In almost all the photographs I have of him, he is glowering—his jaw pushed out, his mouth set stubbornly. He was proud of his body, especially of his feet, and was always showing off his high arches and tapered ankles as evidence that he was descended from good stock.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY ALICIA CZECHOWSKI

As a farmer, C.F. was distinguished by a strong dislike of dirt. Although his education ended at the age of twelve, when he went to work full time for his father, he had an intuitive understanding of the principles of engineering, and he applied this to the automation of the work on the farm. I was raised on his story: C.F. down on his knees as a boy, weeding onions in the heat, looking up to see a man towering over him on horseback, and resolving someday to ascend to that height; C.F. as a young man, hearing someone in Philadelphia talk about overhead irrigation one day, trying this new invention on his celery bed, and, banking on the value of his succulent irrigated celery, going up to New York and persuading some men to lend him the money to expand his business; C.F. as a budding industrialist, buying his father out, and going on a building spree around Seabrook. Over an eight-year period, he put in thirty-five miles of roads, two railroads, a power plant, six enormous greenhouses, an ice plant, a sawmill (to make boxes for the truck), a canning plant, a cold-storage facility, and a school, and he laid out villages for his employees and their families: the "Italian village" for his Italian workers, and so on. In 1924, he went bust and lost the business, but he had got it back by 1930, and soon began freezing vegetables for General Foods, which had acquired the patents for Clarence Birdseye's quick-freezing process. In 1943, Seabrook Farms began selling its own brand of frozen vegetables. C.F. was often referred to in the press as "the Henry Ford of agriculture." In a dazzling picture story that appeared in 1955, *Life* called Seabrook Farms "the biggest vegetable factory on earth."

C.F. didn't own very much of Seabrook Farms outright. The plant, along with the rest of the infrastructure, was built with borrowed money, and all of it was periodically on the verge of being taken over by creditors. A lot of the land was owned by small farmers who had contracts to grow truck for C.F. What my grandfather supplied was vision. He saw fifty thousand acres of small farms functioning as a single enterprise, and he put a lot of his energy into creating a community to bind the farmers and the workers together. The geographical isolation of the place made his creation seem like a separate world. It was a world of hard work and opportunity, the rewards of which were personified by C.F. himself, whom everyone called "the Old Man," even before he was forty.

In 1905, C.F. married Norma Dale Ivins, whom we grandchildren knew as Nana. She was the daughter of a successful farming family that had been in the area since Colonial times. She was taller and better educated than C.F. was, and she helped him finish his education through correspondence courses, and taught him grammar. My father, named John but called Jack, was born in 1917, the youngest of four children. When he was seven, the family moved into a large farmhouse on a dirt road called Polk Lane; everyone in town referred to it as the Big House. Around this time, C.F. made several transatlantic crossings, and he observed what rich people wore, and what they ate and drank; he wanted his house to seem luxurious. He put in a tiled swimming pool—the first pool many people in the area had ever seen—and in the bean fields around the Big House he planted a grand formal garden, like the ones he had seen at great houses in England. High hedges separated the garden into elaborate sections. Wisteria vines trained as standards marched down the center of one section, banked on both sides by beds of hyacinths, tulips, snapdragons, rhododendrons, and chrysanthemums.

In my father's first memories of family dinners, everyone is discussing the business. For him and his two older brothers, Belford and Courtney, the family and the business were the same thing. Money was mixed up in everything. By the time he was nine, my father was working sixty-hour weeks during his school vacation. When he was thirteen, his father made him the quality grader. "It's unbelievable that C.F. would put this much trust in a thirteen-year-old boy," my father says. "His whole life depended on what he got for those crops." This, Dad says, is one of the most puzzling things about his father: a part of him wanted to trust his family members completely, but he also treated them badly, constantly playing one against another in order to get his own way.

C.F. educated his three sons to be engineers, sending Belford and then Dad to Princeton, and Courtney to Lehigh. Their sister, Thelma, was not included in the family business. (I often wonder what it must have been like to be the only daughter in that family—ignored by her competitive brothers as they carved out their fiefdoms.) My father married immediately after graduating from Princeton, in 1939, and returned to Seabrook to work. He and his wife, Ann, lived in one of C.F.'s nicest houses; in fact, it had been previously owned by the man whose shadow fell across C.F. in the onion patch. As a young squire of twenty-five, my father had a Japanese cook and a Jamaican butler. His older brothers were already executives, each with his own area of expertise: Belford was the chief engineer, who designed and ran the freezing plant; Courtney was head of sales. My father took charge of labor recruitment and union negotiation and began building relationships with bankers in Philadelphia and New York.

The image of the Seabrook family was intrinsic to the value of the Seabrook brand. Pictures of father and sons working together frequently appeared in newspaper and magazine stories about the business. "The fact that there was a real family named Seabrook," my father says, "lent itself to a form of publicity that was far more effective than paid advertising." Seabrook Farms' frozen creamed spinach was better than Birdseye frozen creamed spinach because we Seabrooks grew it ourselves. "We grow our own—so we know it's good—and we freeze it right on the spot!" was the company motto. During the fifties, my father was dubbed the Spinach King by the company, and pictures of his handsome face were widely distributed in Seabrook Farms publicity.

But, although father and sons worked side by side, they were not close. "C.F. was never close or intimate in any way with any of his family," my father has written in a memoir of Seabrook Farms that he has been working on. He goes on:

> None of us thought this was odd, it was just the way life was. In fact, it was not until 1953, when the three of us were grown men, and a psychiatrist pointed it out, that we realized how odd that was. We also realized that C.F. had had no close friends in his lifetime. Seen up close, he was cold and calculating, but in public he was highly successful at projecting a warm, caring, friendly image to a large group. At most family parties there was tension, because C.F. would be sarcastically critical of some family member, a daughter-in-law who was hard of hearing or a pre-teen grandson who happened to be overweight.

Nana did her best to shield "the boys," as everyone called her sons, from his fierce passive aggression, but she was no match for C.F. My mother, Elizabeth Toomey Seabrook, once asked Nana how she could have allowed C.F. to be cruel to her sons, and Nana responded, "There was nothing I could do." She could hardly protect herself. On another occasion, she told my mother, "No one will ever know the person I was meant to be."

In the nineteen-forties, C.F.'s health began to fail, and it became even harder for his sons to deal with him. It often fell to their wives to mediate. C.F. sent for a nurse who had once saved his life by curing him of dysentery in the Crimea—a large Australian woman named Miss Leila Small. From then on, anyone who wanted to talk to him had to go through her. Ann Seabrook remembers trying to plead her husband's case to her father-in-law during one of their disputes. C.F. was shut into a steam cabinet that Miss Small often put him in, with just his skinny old head poking out of the top of it, snarling, "Jack's got me by the balls!" When you ask my father about his stormy relationship with his father, he often says, "Well, it goes to show that you can't keep the old bulls and the young bulls in the same pasture," and that, usually, is the end of the conversation.

In the mid-fifties, C.F. began to show signs of what was then called "hardening of the arteries." He had a series of "spells" during which he would, say, show up in a Bridgeton clothing store wearing several layers of bathrobes. But he was capable of being rational when he had to be. My father was then between marriages—this was during his Spinach King phase—and he was often seen with actresses and models in New York hot spots like "21" and the Stork Club. His name appeared frequently in the gossip columns. Charles Ventura: "Frozen-food tycoon Jack Seabrook is planning an early merger with actress Eva Gabor." Dorothy Kilgallen: "The once-flourishing romance between Jack Seabrook . . . and Eva Gabor . . . has grown colder than his products." Earl Wilson: "Ann Miller and Jack Seabrook, the frozen foods fella, are a new duo." Dad's getting all this attention seems to have made his father envious and vindictive. One night, C.F. appeared at the New York apartment of one of Dad's girlfriends, wanting to take her out. He apparently wasn't ready to quit being the Spinach King himself.

AMONG the people sitting in the audience at the Seabrook anniversary was Ray Ono. On the day I interviewed him, in his house near Seabrook, his wife, Mariko, who is the grandmaster of ikebana, or Japanese flower arranging, for South Jersey, was holding a class downstairs for two women. It was cold that morning—the wind, which had been roaring in the trees the night before, had blown the cold in—and the spinach fields were glistening with frost. Six weeks after our discussion, Ray, who was in his early sixties, died suddenly, and when I heard the news the sound of the roaring wind came back to me. In Ray's study, where he and I talked that day, he kept his engineering degrees, five patents, and a picture of his father's fishing boat, which dates from his family's pre-Seabrook life, on the West Coast. After Ray and I were finished, we had lunch with Mariko and her students, and discussed flower arranging. Mariko said, "In ikebana, you can make the arrangements out of anything—grass, branches, rocks, even things you find in the road. You don't have to use only flowers."

Ray Ono's Seabrook story, like that of many other Japanese Americans, starts on December 7, 1941. Right after Pearl Harbor, the F.B.I. picked up most fishermen of Japanese ancestry living in California, on the theory that they were in the best position to be spies. Ray's father, a tuna fisherman who owned a boat with his brother, was arrested one day as he was returning to the dock at Terminal Island, in San Pedro, where the Onos lived. For months, the family did not know what had become of him. They never saw the boat again. Ray told me, "We heard it was used by the Navy as a minesweeper, and might have been sunk off the Philippines. But we're not sure."

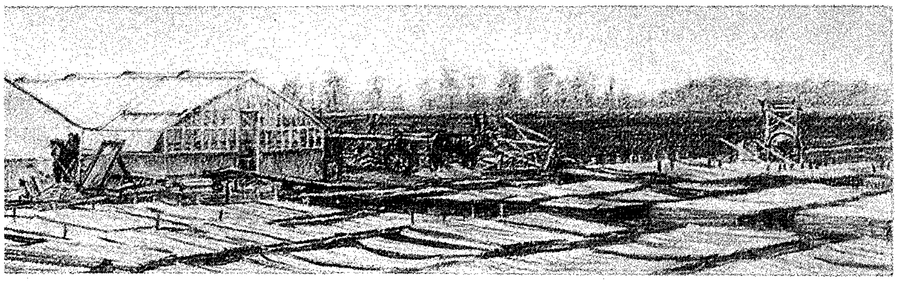
There were immediate calls for the rounding up of all the hundred and ten thousand Japanese residents of the West Coast. Representative John Rankin, of Mississippi, said on the floor of the House, on December 15, 1941, "I'm for catching every Japanese in America . . . and putting them in concentration camps. . . . Damn them! Let's get rid of them now!" Henry McLemore, in a column published in the San Francisco *Examiner*, a Hearst newspaper (the Hearst papers were constantly warning their readers of "the yellow peril"), wrote, "Herd 'em up, pack 'em off and give 'em the inside room in the badlands. . . . Personally, I hate the Japanese. And that goes for all of them." Earl Warren, then the Attorney General of California, said that placing the Japanese in camps was a good idea, because "when we are dealing with the Caucasian race we have methods that will test the loyalty of them. . . . But when we deal with the Japanese we are in an entirely different field and we cannot form any opinion that we believe to be sound."

The men who contributed to making the final decision to send the Japanese to the camps—Franklin D. Roosevelt; Henry Stimson, who was Secretary of War; John McCloy, Assistant Secretary of War; and Francis Biddle, the Attorney General—were the kind of preppie Eastern-establishment types my father had vaguely in mind when he raised me. Biddle expressed reservations two days before the President signed Executive Order 9066, which gave the military the authority to carry out the operation. "A great many West Coast people distrust the Japanese [and] various special interests would welcome their removal from good farm land and the elimination of their competition," Biddle wrote to F.D.R. He added, "My last advice from the War Department is that there is no evidence of imminent attack and from the F.B.I. that there is no evidence of planned sabotage." But F.D.R. signed the order anyway, on February 19, 1942. No civil-rights organizations, including the A.C.L.U., actively protested the order. The Japanese American leadership did little to resist the camps, either. The J.A.C.L. stated that it opposed internment if the policy was motivated by West Coast anti-Japanese racism (which, in hindsight, it clearly was), but would go along with internment if, as F.D.R. had claimed, it was to protect the Japanese *from* racism, and to help the United States win the war. The Japanese leaders suggested to their community that going quietly to the camps was the best way they could prove their loyalty to the United States.

In May of 1942, signs went up in Japanese neighborhoods like the Onos' that all people of Japanese ancestry had seventy-two hours to report to an assembly center, taking with them only as much as they could carry. The Los Angeles assembly center was the racetrack at Santa Anita. People lived in the horse stalls for five months, until the internment camps were finished. Josie Ikeda remembers showering in the big open area where they washed down the lathered-up racehorses in peacetime. "There was one elderly Japanese woman who was so embarrassed, she wore her clothes in the shower," she told me. "We laughed, but it must have been terribly humiliating for her." In October, the internees were moved to the camps, of which there were ten altogether, most of them in remote areas of Arizona, Idaho, and Arkansas.

Ray Ono's family went to Manzanar, one of two camps in California. They remained there for fifteen months. By December of 1944, Roosevelt had begun to have second thoughts about the internment policy, and the government announced that it was closing the camps down. Everyone had to get out. But many of the internees stayed until the government forcibly removed them, because they were afraid to return to their homes. Alfred Elliott, a congressman from Tulare, California, had said, on the floor of the House in 1943, "The only good Jap is a dead Jap," implying that this statement would apply to "every one of them that is sent back" to California.

To permit nisei of draft age to serve in the military, the government devised a "loyalty test." Question 27 was "Are you willing to serve in the armed forces of the United States on combat duty, wherever ordered?" and Question 28 was "Will you swear unqualified allegiance to the United States?" The young men who answered no to both of these questions—about one in ten—were called "no-no boys," and the government made an attempt to segregate them at the camp at Tule Lake. The yes-yes boys were allowed to be drafted (many enlisted), and a large number of them served in the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, which became one of the most decorated units in United States military history. ♦



LEAVING CALIFORNIA

"Psychologically, Seabrook was a lot better," Ray Ono remembered. "There wasn't barbed wire around us."

THE war was good for Seabrook Farms. In one year, the company sold sixty million pounds of processed vegetables to the military, which was amazing business. But the war also made C.F.'s labor problem, always the weak link in his operation, even worse. On this count, C.F. disliked the war. When Belford told C.F., shortly after Pearl Harbor, that he was going to seek a commission, C.F. was furious, and never forgave him; that was the end of Belford's executive position with Seabrook Farms. It was as though Belford had committed an act of treason.

At the end of 1943, my father, who had stayed home from the war and had taken over some of Belford's responsibilities, heard from the American Friends Society, in Philadelphia, that the internees could be recruited as workers. Like many Americans, especially in the East, my father had been only dimly aware of the internment situation, but it sounded to him like one possible solution to the company's labor problem. Seabrook Farms sent scouts to the camps to offer them my grandfather's Fair Deal, and a small group of internees from a camp in Arkansas came to inspect Seabrook. C.F. promised every man and woman a job at the going wage, a house with heat and utilities, and decent schools for their children. In return, they had to agree to work for Seabrook for six months.

Many people who came to work for my grandfather had nowhere else to go. Seabrook became their refuge. Richard Ikeda, who is now sixty, told me, "Seabrook was a real community—there was kinship to the community, obligation to the community. Work was hard, but everybody was in the same boat and suffering together. If there was a funeral, people shared in the expense. If someone needed medicine, people contributed what they could." And there was far less overt racism in Seabrook than elsewhere. My uncle Courtney spoke to the men at the local clubs—the Elks, the Moose, and the Rotarians—and told them he didn't want any trouble for the Japanese.

Barry Semple, a former history teacher at Bridgeton High School, who spoke at the Seabrook anniversary, told me afterward, "I think South Jersey is more a part of the Deep South than it is a part of New Jersey. This is not recognized in Trenton. You say that South Jersey is more like Mississippi or Alabama than it is like Trenton, and those people in Trenton—it's impossible for them to comprehend that." Semple was an active participant in New Jersey's efforts to integrate the local public schools, in the sixties, and he was threatened by the Klan. He went on, "So, with all the hatred of the war, for the Japanese to come in here, and for something this positive to happen—it's an amazing thing. And it says a lot about what your family must have done."

But Michi Weglyn, the author of "Years of Infamy: The Untold Story of America's Concentration Camps," who also spoke at the anniversary, told me that life for her parents in Seabrook was hard. She remembers that her mother's hands cracked from sorting beans all day, and wouldn't heal. When she was planning her remarks, Weglyn told me, one elderly man said of working conditions in the plant, "It was awful. I hope you're going to give them hell." Weglyn thought, Oh my God, what have I got myself into? She also reread Seiichi Higashide's book, "Adios to Tears: The Memoirs of a Japanese-Peruvian Internee in U.S. Concentration Camps," which contains a section about working life at Seabrook:

> We were required to work 12 hours a day. Initially, men were paid 50 cents an hour and women 35 cents an hour, with no overtime pay or differential for night work. If one arrived at work late, or if one went home sick, that portion would be subtracted from his hours in five-minute units. We had only one free day every two weeks, when we moved from one shift to the other. There were no paid holidays, no sick leave. Even for that time, these working conditions were considered to be severe.

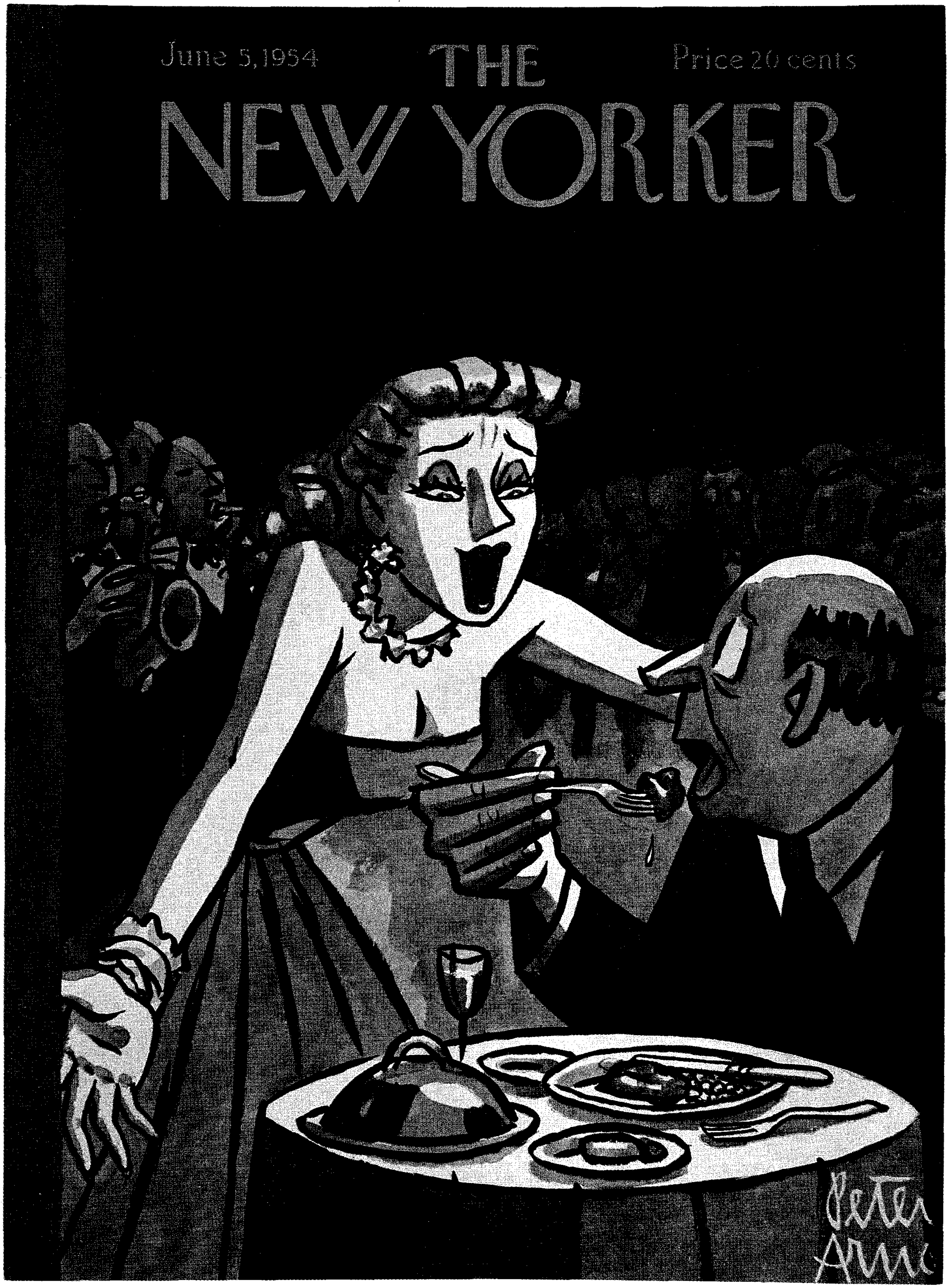
In the end, Weglyn gave a mostly nostalgic speech, her voice vibrating with the emotion of what she could not say. She recalled working as a d.j. on the night shift in the plant when she was in high school, playing Perry Como records to keep the workers awake, and especially remembered playing "Prisoner of Love," which was the hit song of the summer of '46.

Ray Ono and his family lived at 969 Roosevelt Street, in a concrete-block building that was not much of an improvement over the camp barracks, and in some respects was worse. In camp, they had had no refrigerator and a wood-burning stove; in Seabrook, they had an icebox and a coal-burning stove. Manzanar was temperate in the wintertime; Seabrook was freezing. In camp, internees did not have to work, and their food was prepared for them by the military; in Seabrook, people had to work very hard and provide for themselves. But Ray told me, "Psychologically, Seabrook was a lot better. There wasn't barbed wire around us. We were free."

For Ray, as for many of the boys and girls, camp had been fun, and Seabrook was more fun. "As a kid, you don't worry about hardship. You're going to school, and you have all these activities," he said. In the summertime, Ray picked beans, like all the boys, working beside Estonians, Latvians, Jamaicans, and Puerto Ricans. The Japanese kids organized their own gangs, with names like the Rainbows and the Blue Devils, but, instead of fighting, the kids competed in baseball, football, and basketball. Ray was a good athlete, and went on to glory as a running back at Bridgeton High School. Barry Semple told me about watching him play in 1950: "Ray was behind a guy named Tex Robinson, who was a great football player. . . . But then Tex's jaw got broken, and everyone said, Oh, well, that's it, we've only got this little Japanese kid to fill in for Tex—we're done for." Ray, in his first game replacing Robinson, scored three touchdowns—two of them on long, spectacular runs. "That was the first time I really began to realize that the Japanese were really something special," Semple said.

After the war, Seabrook Farms grew rapidly. Under its own label, it produced a vast amount of frozen spinach, frozen baby peas, and frozen lima beans. The technology of frozen food was exploding, and Seabrook was at the forefront. Science was applied to every aspect of agriculture. Temperature, sunlight, water, and seed were all taken into account and factored together as "growth units," in a system that allowed Seabrook to react to changing weather and to determine the day when the crops would be ripest. Harvest was a highly organized military assault on vegetables—the agricultural equivalent of D Day. The harvest of lima beans went like this: First, tractors dragged mowers through the lima-bean fields, laying the vines into windrows. A loader followed, gathering the windrows onto flatbed dump trucks. (This went on day and night, under floodlights.) The trucks carried the windrows to a viner, a very loud machine that separated the beans from the stems and leaves, which were fed to the company's beef cattle. (My father had to keep the cattle's existence a secret from C.F., who hated all animals.) The beans were rushed to the plant to be washed in flumes, blanched

FORTY-ONE YEARS AGO IN THE NEW YORKER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Price 20 cents
Peter Arno

in steam tunnels, and funnelled downstairs, into a circular container filled with brine. The heavier beans would sink in the brine, and the smaller ones—which would be packaged as "Extra Fancy Grade"—would float on the surface. After being sorted, the beans passed along a conveyor belt lined with women, who removed any refuse and stray smaller beans, and they went on to automatic packagers and then to giant "freezing trays," which were set at thirty-seven degrees below zero. If the beans came from nearby fields, less than an hour had passed since they were harvested.

Ray's father was one of about forty men who removed packages of frozen beans from the freezing trays and put them on racks, which were then moved by other men to a cold-storage warehouse or to waiting refrigerated trucks or railcars. "My father was a part of the precision machinery that Seabrook was famous for," Ray told me, "a worker in an assembly line of food." Ray's mother also worked in the plant, separating lima beans. The parents alternated their twelve-hour shifts, so that one of them would always be home with the children. Although a lot of Japanese American families saw Seabrook only as a place to regroup, and returned to the West Coast in the late forties, Ray's father insisted that the Onos remain. "The boat was gone, and all we had were the clothes on our backs," Ray told me. "So we stayed. Dad's job was terribly monotonous. He knew about working on diesel engines, from his fishing days, and we tried to get him to work in the shop, where the work was more interesting, but he wouldn't do it." He unloaded freezer trays until he retired, in 1958; he died in 1960. "He'd come home, eat supper, have his glass of wine, and go to bed," Ray said. "He didn't tell us much about it. We knew it was hard work. It was hard to determine what his feelings were. He had the Japanese attitude of *shikataganai*—'it can't be helped.' " Ray added, "The thing is, we were poor, but we didn't know we were poor. Our parents never let us feel like we were poor. This is something that came out very strongly at the Seabrook reunion—the incredible effort our parents made to keep the family strong and together, and the respect we owe them for that. You hear a lot about why the Japanese Americans have done all right, while other minorities can't seem to get going. I think the real difference is the strong family structure."

THE point at which my grandfather began to hate his sons is hard to place. My mother, whom my father married in 1956, remembers my grandmother telling her it began when C.F. realized that he was old and his sons were young. Nana also thought that C.F. felt guilty over the way he had dealt with his own father. In 1911, without telling his father, C.F. went to meet with some financiers in New York, hoping to borrow money to expand the farm. He took the train to Jersey City and crossed the Hudson in a ferry, which landed not far from where I live now. After he had secured the money, he went home and offered to buy his father out for far less than half of what his New York creditors had proposed the farm was worth. Basically, he cheated his father. As C.F. grew older, Nana believed, the guilt he felt over how he had treated his father turned into paranoia that his sons would do the same thing to him.

The fall of Seabrook Farms was set in motion by Hurricane Hazel, which struck South Jersey in October of 1954 and wiped out all of Seabrook's spinach crop. An association of Philadelphia bankers, led by a man named Ben Sawin, told C.F. that they felt he wasn't up to the task of rebuilding the company, and that they wanted my father to take over. A three-man voting trust, composed of my father, Sawin, and C.F., was established to manage the business. "C.F. seemed to accept this," my dad says. "He held a big family meeting in 1954, and announced that he was retiring and that I would be running the business from now on. Mother was overjoyed. Belford started clapping, which was rather indelicate."

In 1958, Seabrook had its best year ever. "Now in board meetings people didn't talk about 'truck' anymore," my father says. "We talked about expanding and diversifying sources of production. We were moving into frozen orange juice and gourmet frozen entrées. The Seabrook brand was a national brand now, and to keep it constantly supplied we needed growers in Florida and California. But your grandfather couldn't understand that." The truck-farming economy on which my grandfather's vision was based was giving way to a supermarket economy in which fresh produce would be available all year round and consumers wouldn't care where it came from.

In 1959, C.F. refused to renew the voting trust. The banks informed him that they would not continue to lend money to Seabrook Farms unless he renewed it. Like any farming enterprise, Seabrook could not survive without the banks. But C.F. was stubborn; he wouldn't budge. The head of Gerard Trust then told my father that, in order to save the business, the family should have C.F. declared incompetent to manage his affairs so that, if necessary, he could be forcibly removed.

Here my father faced an almost impossible choice. Did he stick with the bankers, who were offering him his livelihood, the salvation of everything he had worked for, and the chance to run the business on his own, even though this would mean condemning his father? Or did he stick with his father, even though it meant ruin for both of them? Dad chose the bankers: he was his father's son. For my grandmother, the choice was between C.F. and my father, and she chose her beloved Jack. My father's sister, Thelma, and her husband thought that what the boys were trying to do to C.F. was unfair—that, whatever the old man's weaknesses were, he didn't deserve this humiliation. They sided with C.F. A hearing was scheduled to determine whether C.F. was competent or not. Nana and her sons hired Richard Hughes, who later became the governor of New Jersey, to represent their side.

While the hearing was pending, C.F. had another "spell," and the family had him taken to a psychiatric hospital. C.F. soon got out on a writ of habeas corpus, and went to the Philadelphia newspapers with his story, accusing his family in print of having "shanghaied" him into a mental institution so that his sons, whom he called "Boy Scouts," could "take control of the business." He also said, "This is a conspiracy on Jack's part." These clippings have been carefully preserved by my father's former secretary, Elizabeth Gauntt, and are stowed in the barn at my parents' place, along with the glowing publicity from that time (things like a copy of Alice

Hughes' column A Woman's New York: "Not everyone is as fortunate as myself and 19 other . . . editors and writers invited to be the guests of a happy family of 'gentleman farmers' in New Jersey").

Shortly before the day of the hearing, C.F. played his trump card. On a Saturday night in May, 1959, he sold Seabrook Farms to a wholesale grocery company for three million dollars. He had created Seabrook Farms, and, to keep his sons from taking over, he destroyed it. On the day of the sale, C.F. appeared in a local barbershop wearing three neckties, and, when someone asked him why, he said, "Three million, three neckties." C.F. also changed his will, to make sure that his wife and sons wouldn't get any of this money—effectively disowning them. He and Nana continued to live together in the Big House, but they took their meals separately, and rarely spoke. When C.F. died, in 1964, and the family saw that he had left virtually no money to Nana in his will, and hadn't even provided a place for her to live, they sued the estate, so that she was able to stay on in the Big House and receive enough money to sustain her.

A few months after Seabrook Farms was sold, my mother answered the door one morning to find a man, sent by C.F., holding an eviction notice. C.F. had refused to let my parents buy their house, although they had offered to repeatedly, and now he was kicking them out. Exiled from Seabrook, Mom and Dad moved to a house outside Salem, about twenty miles away. My father was forty-two, was out of a job, and owed money. I was born in 1959, right in the middle of all this—my father's first son, his namesake, who in better times might have given my grandfather joy. But, as things stood between them, my grandfather refused to recognize my birth.

All my life—in grade school, in college, at the different places I've worked—my reputation as a Seabrook Farms frozen-food heir has accompanied me. It's like a birthmark. I used to try to conceal it. At times, while shopping in supermarkets, I avoided the frozen-food section, not wanting to catch sight of that creamed spinach. (The Seabrook label lived on, even though my family didn't own it.) Even in cyberspace, a place where I had imagined, naïvely, that frozen-food heirs don't matter, someone in a discussion group I had contributed to posted:

> He's the Seabrook Frozen Foods heir, I heard today . . . authoritatively.

To which I responded,

> As to my being the frozen-food heir, my grandfather started that business but he and my father had a terrible fight and he fired and disowned my father and sold the business to spite him . . . so in fact my only inheritance is bitterness.

The person replied,

> Never again will I buy that frozen creamed spinach.

And I replied,

> I know very well what that statement will cost you, and I appreciate it. Because in spite of all the pain that creamed spinach cost my family, it is still the best creamed spinach you can buy.

My grandfather did see me a few times before he died, at age eighty-three. Although my father and his father were never actually reconciled (and he and his sister, Thelma, were estranged for the rest of her life), our family sometimes went over to the Big House for Sunday lunch with Nana. I have only one memory of my grandfather. I am taken upstairs to see him by my father and mother. My grandfather is sitting on the floor, fully dressed, building something with an Erector set. My mother says, "C.F., this is Johnny, your grandson. This is Johnny," and my grandfather just looks at me in a childishly mean way, his mouth curled down at the corners. I start to worry that his hands are going to snake out and grab my ankles, and I brace myself, putting my hands on my knees, ready for him. He never did say my name. ♦

A MAN OF HIS TIME

"Your grandfather felt that the workers were a part of him," Richard Ikeda said. "In a way, it was a very Japanese system."

BECAUSE C.F. gave six hundred families a home after the camps, he is remembered by many people of Japanese ancestry as a kind of redeemer—a very different role from the destroyer he plays in my family mythology. One of my early memories is of going to the Sunday service at the Deerfield church, and of Japanese faces outside the church looking extremely happy to see me, for reasons I couldn't understand but knew had something to do with my grandfather.

At the Seabrook anniversary, we watched a film called "Seabrook: A New Beginning," made by William Brown. In the film, people spoke of my grandfather as a savior. "He was one of the finest persons you could ever meet," Samah Pearson said. "A wonderful person. And I'll never forget him." Esther Ono (no relation to Ray), who now owns a beauty parlor in Seabrook, said, "I always feel grateful that Mr. Seabrook did undertake to do this for us." I felt a familiar twist of sansei cynicism. Yes, C.F. helped these people, but it was always good business to help them. With the Japanese Americans, Seabrook Farms got a group of amazingly loyal, uncomplaining, hardworking people, who had a lot to do with the company's great success after the war. Later in the film, someone said of C.F., "He was a little man, but he had a lot of noodles." That sounded more like the C.F. I know.

I have never met anyone who worked for Seabrook Farms—outside of my family, that is—who doesn't speak well of my grandfather. When I was doing interviews for this story, people would often open their conversations with me by saying, "I want to thank you for what your family did for my family," or "I just want to say what an honor this is"—not my usual experience as a reporter. Something about C.F. inspired people. He was the American Dream come true: the poor farmer's son who by wits alone becomes a captain of industry. He gave the Japanese American workers something to believe in about America at a time when their faith was being tested.

Gene Nakata, who was ten when he arrived in Seabrook, told me that his father did not want to return to California, because of the loyalty he felt toward my grandfather. " 'We're going to stay here and help Mr. Seabrook,' " Nakata remembers his father telling him. " 'All our clothes, our furniture—all of this stuff—is from Mr. Seabrook. Without him, we wouldn't have this stuff.' " Richard Ikeda said, "I think your grandfather was a man of his time. Seabrook was a family-owned buisness, and he felt the obligations of the owner to the people. He felt that the workers were part of him. In a way, it was a very Japanese system. This feeling of belonging is what the modern corporation is trying to get back to."

But this benevolent, paternalistic C. F. Seabrook, the C.F. of the Seabrook anniversary, is not the C.F. that has been bequeathed to me. My C.F. is a racist and an ugly Red-baiter. It is said that C.F. enjoyed holding forth at the dinner table about the different races that worked for him, citing qualities of one that made it superior to another. He was enraged when one of his granddaughters became engaged to a Mexican, and sent a lawyer down to Mexico to threaten the suitor's family. He certainly did not hold the Latvians' and the Estonians' anti-Semitism against them. Many of the Japanese were anti-Communist, and C.F. approved of that: he liked to portray unions as a bunch of Commies. Throughout the thirties and into the forties, C.F. waged an epic battle with local labor unions, which repeatedly tried to organize Seabrook. (They eventually succeeded.) From a union perspective, what my grandfather had going in Seabrook was a pre-capitalist, feudalistic state, in which the workers were little more than serfs. My grandfather argued that the workers were happy as they were, and he was not above hiring thugs to beat up workers who didn't agree with him. In August of 1934, *The Nation* published an account of a strike at Seabrook:

> Our committee watched the peaceful picketing which was in progress. . . . When he [C.F.] thought that observers had disappeared from the scene, an attack of tear and nausea gas was launched on the strikers. . . . Belford Seabrook, son of the proprietor, himself threw a bomb into a house then occupied only by an Italian mother and two very small children. He had previously shouted to his men: "Get this woman; she talks too much." The bomb, hurled through the window, landed on a bed and set the sheets ablaze. The rooms were so filled with smoke and gas fumes that the place was uninhabitable for more than two days.

Needless to say, this version of village life at Seabrook was not mentioned at the Seabrook Fiftieth Year Celebration.

As I sat in the audience, I was a little bit nervous for my father, who was going to have to get up and speak. His topic, which the organizers of the anniversary had set for him, was his father. What were the qualities of C. F. Seabrook that had enabled him to create this unusual community in South Jersey? My father had had a lot of trouble writing this speech. When I visited him in Vermont, last August, he was lost in details about the engineering marvels of Seabrook Farms; and the more trouble he had in reckoning with C.F., the more technical details about the farming operation he would accumulate. When I got home from that visit, I sent Dad E-mail saying:

> Perhaps some of the difficulty you are feeling in writing this is that you want to please these people by giving them someone to worship, but unfortunately the CF you knew doesn't fit the bill. If that is the case, well, I'm not sure what you should do. My inclination would be to tell it like it is but I am sometimes rash.

We talked on the phone. Dad said, "Well, I guess it's not a lie if it isn't the whole truth." His voice sounded kind of listless. I wondered if his weariness came from wrestling with the knowledge that if his father had been in the place of the California farmers who wanted the Japanese immigrants' land, he might have been just as happy as they were to put the Japanese away in the camps. Or maybe he was still angry over what his father had done to him. It didn't seem appropriate to ask Dad these questions: my sansei curiosity about the family past was butting up against his nisei reserve. Did he feel guilty over how he had dealt with his father? I could see how some of my cousins—Thelma's children in particular—might think that he should. I tiptoed around that subject with him, but he would say only, "Well, maybe C.F.'s mistake was that he didn't raise one of his sons to be a psychiatrist." That made me think of something that Ron Uba, the president of the New York chapter of the Japanese American Citizens League, had told me, speaking of the older Japanese people's experience in the camps: "They sometimes have trouble separating the hurt of the experience out of their lives enough to talk about it."

I asked Dad whether he regretted not having a family business to pass along to his children. No, he said, he thought maybe it was a good thing that Seabrook Farms was no more. "To this day, I can't say that for me personally this was a tragedy," he said. "I was broke and out on my ass at forty-two, and I've made a lot of money since." Ben Sawin had helped him get a job with Howard Butcher, a Philadelphia stockbroker who owned several utility companies. (Today, Sawin's picture hangs next to C.F.'s picture in Dad's office. Dad sometimes wonders whether in some way he was a surrogate for Sawin's own son, who committed suicide when he was fifteen years old.) In ten years, Dad built the utility companies into a billion-dollar business, International Utilities. Like his own father, he came back from midlife disaster to achieve even greater success.

"Of course, it's conceivable we could have done great things with the business," Dad went on. "Seabrook might today be one of the greatest companies in the food business. But when you inherit something, you always have that doubt: Could I have done it on my own? I think I have more confidence now than I ever would have if I had stayed at Seabrook. Also, it might not have been good for you, or for your brother, if Seabrook had lasted."

"I would probably be running the Seabrook P.R. department," I said, thinking, Actually, maybe I am.

"American family businesses just don't last long," Dad said. "I heard there was a get-together in Europe recently of families who have been in business together for four hundred years. That's unthinkable in America."

I asked Dad if he had anything at all that his father had written in his own hand, and he said he had one letter. "I'll give it to you someday," he said. With a shock, I realized that my father did not have much more information about his father at his disposal than I did. An inspirational article about C.F. that was published in a 1921 edition of *The American Magazine* (Ring Lardner's essay on being thirty-five is the cover story) provided my father with a lot of the material for his speech. Surely, I thought, there must be memories of C.F. that my father carried with him—moments of happiness or uncertainty that Dad and his father had shared? Where were they? They seemed to be unavailable, blown away. Of this extraordinary man and his immense creation there was so little left!

One quality of C.F.'s that comes through clearly in people's memories of him is that he didn't like to tell you what he was thinking. He hated it when you wrote down anything he said. Sometimes my father would try to take notes at business meetings, and C.F. would rail about it: "What're you doing? Stop doing that!"

Ten years ago, I interviewed Jonas McGallaird, who was one of my grandfather's most faithful retainers, and he told me the story of meeting C.F. for the first time, in the spring of 1924. His story is the most vivid snapshot of my grandfather's methods that I have.

Jonas: I went to C.F.'s office on a Saturday afternoon, a lazy day, and there set C.F., reading a magazine. "Lookin' for somebody?" he said. I said I'm lookin' for a job. "Hmm," he said. "Where you been workin'?" I said I'd been workin' on the railroad. "Live around here?" I said I was living in Bridgeton. "Have a phone?" I said yeah. "What's the number?" He wrote the number down. And when C.F. wrote a number down you knew it was down, because he made numbers like they made 'em in Bible times. He just made big numbers. He wrote big.

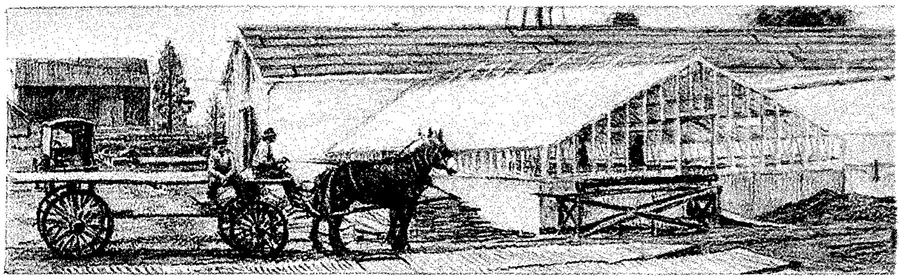
"Well," C.F. said, "I gotta get on. I gotta go," he said. "You lock the door when you go out." And I said, "Well I'm goin' out, too, you lock your own damn door," I said. And that's just the way I said it, too.

The next day the phone rang and it was Seabrook. He said, "You want to go to Atlantic City?" I said yes. He said, "Well you come out to my place and we'll go to Atlantic City." So I went over to his place and there set this big Packard outside the house, a Club *See*-dan. C.F. came out and said, "You want to drive or you want me to drive?" I said it doesn't make any difference to me. "Well," he said, "you drive. You know how to drive?" "Sure," I said. "You know how to get to Atlantic City?" I said yeah. So we went.

In Atlantic City, C.F. spent an hour in the President Hotel, probably making arrangements for some Atlantic City bootleggers to pick up the applejack he had been making from his apple crop that year. In those days, the long grass that grew in the marshes was harvested by local farmers and sold as salt hay to local glass factories, where it was used as packing material, so farmers like C.F. knew all the little cricks and meadows through which booze could be run to the bay.

Jonas: I bought the Sunday paper and set there in the sun and after a while C.F. came out and said let's go home. . . . We got home and C.F. said, "You got a place to keep this car?" "Yeah," I said. "Off the street?" "Yeah." He said, "Now, I want to go to New York tomorrow morning, and I want to catch the seven o'clock train. Can you take me?" So I drove that Packard home and my mother said, "What in the heck are you doing with that car?" And I said, "I do not know."

In this roundabout way, Jonas became C.F.'s chauffeur. When C.F. died, Jonas asked my father if he could drive the hearse that took C.F. to his grave, saying, "The old son of a bitch rode behind me for forty years, and this is the first time he won't be able to talk back." ♦



FATHERS AND SONS

As my father's story got closer to its sad conclusion, I found myself hoping it would turn out differently.

My father rose to speak to long applause from the crowd. He wore a yellow bow tie, and, although he is now white-haired and seventy-seven, he looked boyishly slim in his gentleman farmer's suit. He said he was going to speak about "a man of incredible accomplishments and incredible contradictions." Japanese faces around me looked thrilled at the sight of him—the same expression I remember seeing on the faces outside the church as a boy.

Dad began to reminisce. He recalled the house about half a mile away, now gone, where he was born. He recalled his father's father, Arthur, "a genial man" with "great flowing white mustaches." He recalled the terrible fights that C.F. used to have with his father. He recalled the stable across the street from that house, where a blacksmith named A. B. Skilowitzsky worked. "He was always stripped to the waist and sweating, even in the wintertime, and he pounded red-hot iron, and there was the smell of soft-coal smoke and burning hooves." He described how, after agricultural prices had dropped sharply, C.F. lost the business. "He was out, and he didn't look back," my father said. "This was another of C.F.'s great contradictions. He never cared about money."

My father is good at telling stories. His greatest talent may be his ability to make you believe his version of events. Over the years, I have occasionally sat listening to him explain something to me, thinking, You bastard, you expect me to swallow that, and then trying to give him my version and failing miserably, and later on, in my head, succeeding brilliantly in putting his version to rout. But on this day, sitting in the audience, I was pulling for him. I knew his view of the past wasn't the only view, but in his struggle to deal with his father's legacy I was completely on his side.

As his story got closer to its sad conclusion, I found myself hoping it would turn out differently. My father and his father would realize the madness of what they were doing. Angels would whisper in their ears. Then my father said something I had never heard before: "On October 3, 1941, C.F. had a very serious stroke, and he was incapacitated for a couple of years after that." Not even my sister Carol, who is seventeen years older than I am, had heard about this before.

"Prior to the stroke, he had exuded the confidence that he could do anything," my father went on. "His great heroes in life were the builders. Steve Bechtel and Henry Kaiser—the people who said, 'Show me the job, I'll do it. I'll get it done.' Well, that's the way C.F. was. But after that he never really had confidence that he could do things on his own. And, although he eventually learned to project a public image of confidence, when he was with people who were his peers—his directors, his bankers—he simply lacked the old confidence."

My father was saying that physical weakness had cost C.F. his confidence, and that the effort to make up for lost confidence had caused all the trouble that followed. This was Dad's version of *shikataganai.*

AFTER the ceremony, many people visited the new museum in Seabrook—the Seabrook Educational and Cultural Center, which is in the basement of the municipal building. The collection there was assembled by Ellen Nakamura and John Fuyuume, who invited the collaboration of many other former residents of Seabrook, and there are hundreds of good pictures of life at Seabrook from 1900 to 1959. (C.F. apparently didn't mind having photographers around.) The rooms of the museum are also filled with John Fuyuume's friendly manner. John, who is sixty-nine, got a master's degree in music literature when he was young. But he returned to Seabrook to work, and did not leave to get a Ph.D. and teach, as he had planned, because, he says, my grandfather told him, "It doesn't matter how many Ph.D.s you have, it's how many Ph.D.s you have working for you that counts."

I said, "He sold you that old line."

"No, it's true," John said.

While I was reading in the museum, I saw some of the older people who had worked at Seabrook all their lives come in and go slowly from photograph to photograph. John would often join them. One elderly man paused at a picture of the Seabrook power plant, and asked John, "Were you there when they dynamited her? It was unbelievable. The dynamite took the first story clear out from under her, so that you could see clear through to the other side. But she just hung there in the air for about five seconds. It was like she didn't want to come down."

Other Seabrook-anniversary activities included a tour of my grandparents' house, which is now Seabrook House, a drug-and-alcohol-rehabilitation center. Paul Noguchi, a professor of anthropology at Bucknell, told me, "That was something I really wanted to see. The image I had of your grandfather's house, as a boy growing up in Seabrook, was that it was an impenetrable place, surrounded by shrubbery—something I never thought I'd be in." Richard Lamke, the communication coördinator for Seabrook House, walked groups through the place quickly, pointing out odd patches of grandeur that remain from my grandfather's day, like the tiles in the bathrooms and on the floor of the porch. People also toured my grandfather's formal English gardens, which had seemed wonderful to me as a boy, and I was glad to see that they had kept some of their former glory. Time has not erased them as easily as it has some of C.F.'s other works.

I hadn't been in the Big House since I was eight. With Lamke, I went down to the basement, where what Jonas called "a can-house band" used to play during C.F.'s New Year's Eve parties. Some Seabrook House patients were sitting on beat-up furniture, watching daytime TV.

"And this was the bar," Lamke said, showing me an elaborate built-in wet bar.

"Guess you don't need that anymore."

"No."

Upstairs, we looked up the stairwell that leads to the room where I remember seeing my grandfather. The staircase is narrow, but it's not, as I remember it, winding, like the staircase in a chiller-theatre feature that scared me when I was a kid. I put my foot on the first step, but then changed my mind.

"There's nothing to see up there but offices anyway," Lamke said.

FOR lots of families, including mine, the Seabrook anniversary was a chance to see relatives you rarely get to see. My family's reunion took place in the back yard of my parents' house on Saturday afternoon. My cousin Ivan Seabrook—actually C. F. Seabrook III, and the only one of us who looks much like C.F.—told me he had run into an old Estonian man right after the ceremony. "I said to the guy, 'Hey, Seabrook sounds like it was a pretty great place back then.' The guy goes, 'Oh, that was all a bunch of crap. They were just as prejudiced here as anywhere else.' I went, 'Whoa!' "

Everyone was talking about my father's speech. To Carol I said that the story of the stroke was a good compromise—a way of respecting C.F. while at the same time acknowledging that something had gone wrong—because it meant you could blame a physical infirmity for the trouble that came later in the family, and not blame C.F. She said, "Of course, it's also nice to believe we didn't inherit the genes that caused this kind of behavior."

My mother had hoped that the younger generation would play a softball game, but nobody really wanted to. She turned to my cousin Wessie, a plant engineer, who is my age, and said, "Hasn't the weather this fall been incredible?"

"Good for the spinach," Wessie said.

Dad chatted with Lisa, my wife. "What actually happened," he told her, "was that C.F. was in Florida when the Japanese arrived, and when he got home and found all these Japanese people here he hit the roof." Lisa tried to follow up on this bombshell, but Dad, who was known as the Silver Fox among his Philadelphia business cronies, withdrew into his den, saying only, "Well, victory has many fathers." (The next morning at the Deerfield church, as he and my mother were walking out, the Reverend Borror complimented my father on his talk, saying what a good speaker he was. "It was on the tip of my tongue to say, 'Well, Reverend, my advantage is I don't have to believe in the gospel I preach,' " my father told me.)

At lunch, I sat next to my cousin Jim, who is Belford's son and Wessie's father.

WORKED LATE ON A TUESDAY NIGHT

Again.
Midtown is blasted out and silent,
drained of the crowd and its doggy day.
I trample the scraps of deli lunches
some ate outdoors as they stared dumbly
or hooted at us career girls—the haggard
beauties, the vivid can-dos, open raincoats aflap
in the March wind as we crossed to and fro
in front of the Public Library.

Never thought you'd be one of them,
did you, little lady?
Little Miss Phi Beta Kappa,
with your closetful of pleated
skirts, twenty-nine till death do us
part! Don't you see?
The good schoolgirl turns thirty,
forty, singing the song of time management
all day long, lugging the briefcase

home. So at 10 P.M.
you're standing here
with your hand in the air,
cold but too stubborn to reach
into your pocket for a glove, cursing
the freezing rain as though it were
your difficulty. It's pathetic,
and nobody's fault but
your own. Now

the tears,
down into the collar.
Cabs, cabs, but none for hire.
I haven't had dinner; I'm not half
of what I meant to be.
Among other things, the mother
of three. Too tired,
tonight, to seduce the father.

—DEBORAH GARRISON

We spoke about our grandfather in our own way—a reserved way that could be described as "Japanese." With Seabrooks it is often hard to tell what people are thinking, and as we talked I felt that C.F. was the source of a strange diffidence between us, lingering from the days when family members were on opposite sides.

Jim, now sixty-one, was the sansei who had the most to lose from the issei-nisei conflict that destroyed the business. He continued to work for the new owners, but quit in 1977; eight days later, he rented an office in town, and, working with his brother Charlie (C. F. Seabrook II), established Seabrook Brothers & Sons, a frozen-food company that is situated three miles from the old plant. Jim's three sons work there, and so do Charlie's sons Ivan and Peter; and lots of other Seabrooks, including my brother, Bruce, have done seasonal work in the bean fields. Seabrook Brothers is very successful, and once again functions as a local buyer for the farmers in the area. Until this year, Jim packed vegetables only for other labels, because he was not permitted to sell his vegetables under the Seabrook name. Last spring, thirty-five years after C.F. sold the name, Jim bought it back.

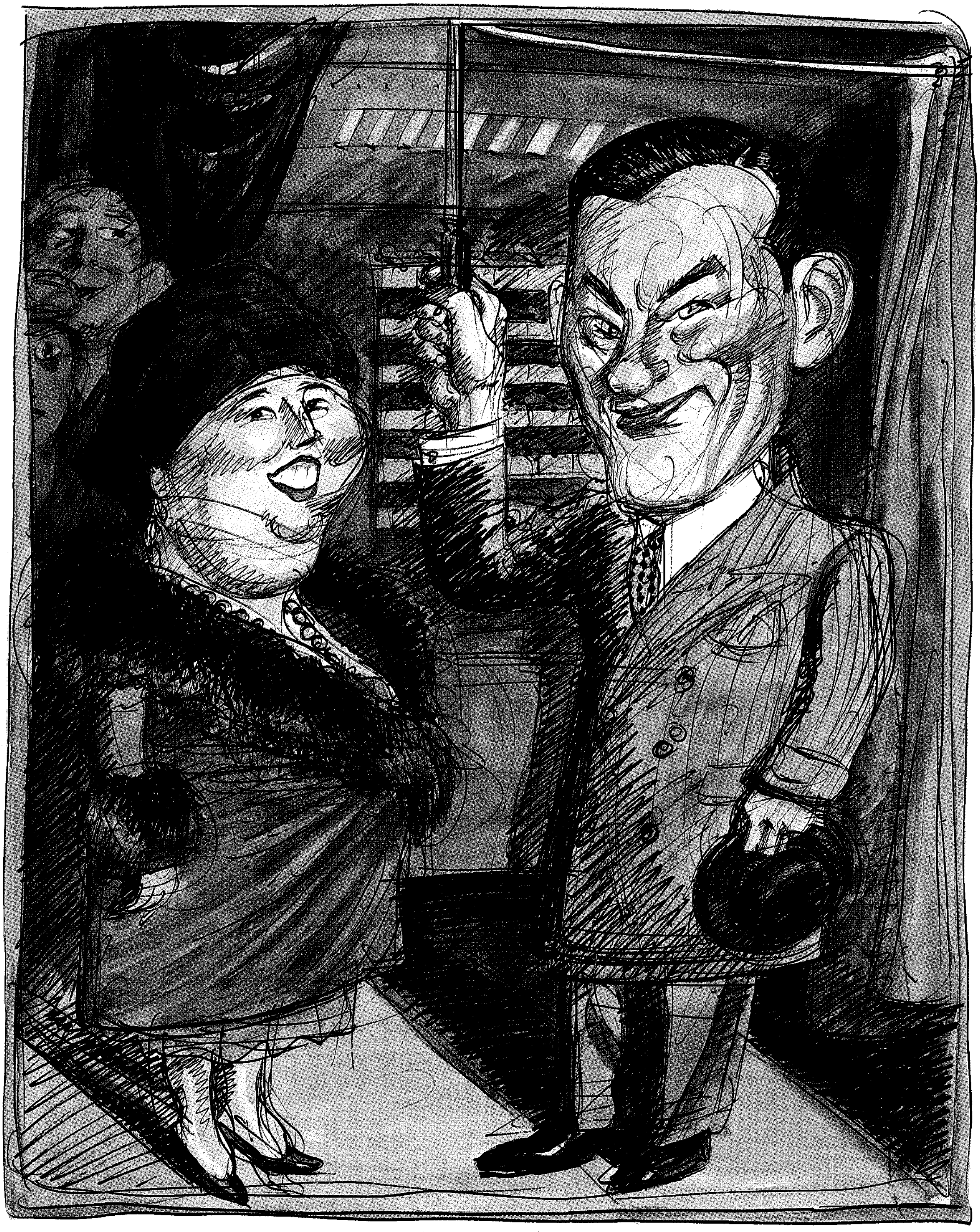
"It's a good feeling," he said.

After lunch, I threw a football with Carol's sixteen-year-old son, Rodolphe. My mind wandered back over the day, remembering the quiet indignation in Michi Weglyn's voice, which caused it almost to warble; and the triumph in Donna Pearson's voice when she declared, "There's no excuse for can't. . . . If my parents could do it, so can I"; and the resignation in my father's voice when he said of C.F., "He simply lacked the old confidence." I remembered what the minister had said—that God is just and merciful, and that his purpose is worked out in time and in the lives of those who seek to do his good—and I wondered whether that was true. It did indeed seem to me that I had caught a glimpse of a purpose that morning. The Japanese American families' experience at Seabrook was like the white light behind an X-ray, which was my family's experience, and in the X-ray I could see a hairline pattern I hadn't seen before. But was this God's pattern, or was it the lingering force of my grandfather's energy? Or was it nothing?

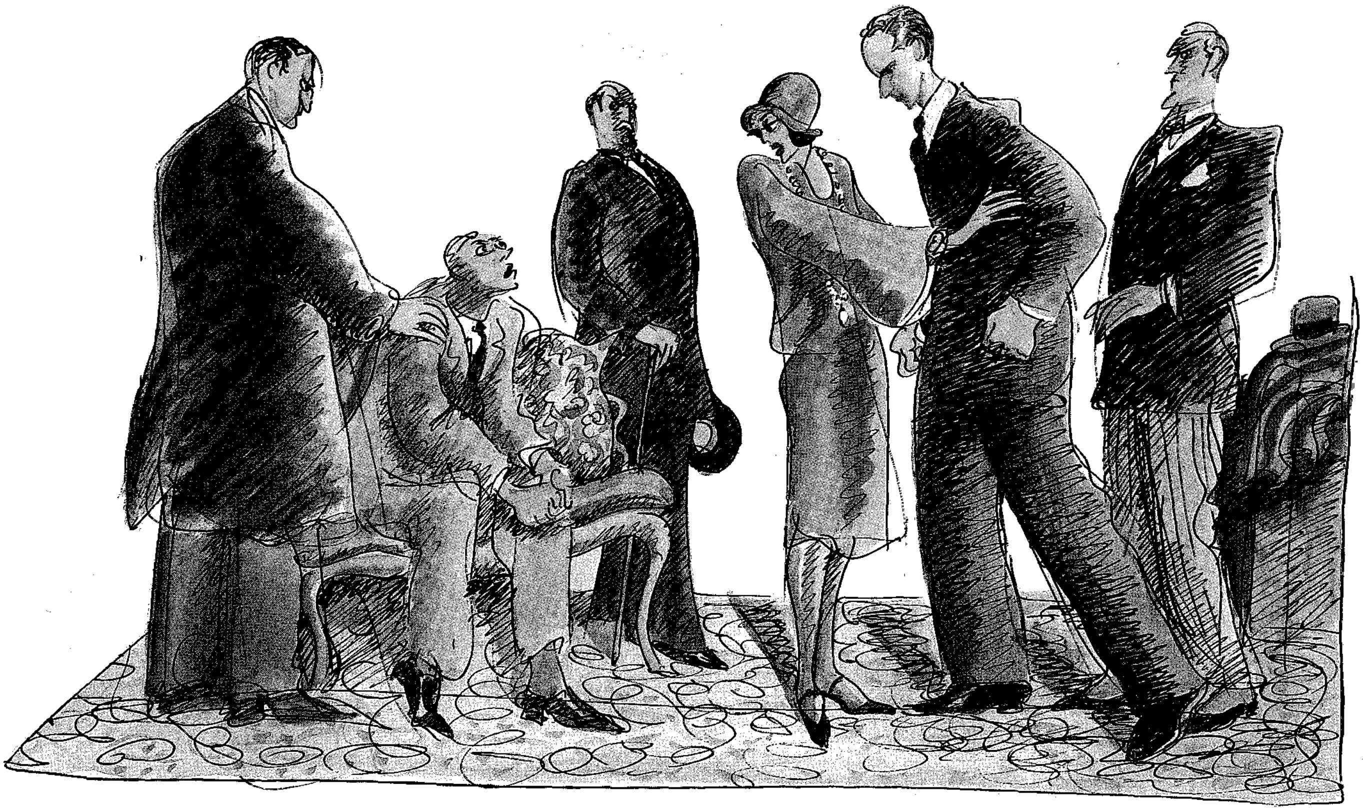
I thought about all the Japanese American family reunions going on right then around South Jersey, and wondered whether any of those people had found any answers. Standing there in my parents' yard, I had the sense that the purpose I had glimpsed that morning was already fading, as all of us returned to our own lives, each to the effort to make sense of his or her story—Ray Ono and Josie and Richard Ikeda and Gene Nakata and John Fuyuume of their stories, my father of his, I of mine. C.F. was a father to all of us. But his legacy is harsh and difficult to understand. It says that you cannot expect fairness—although you may get it anyway—and you cannot expect forgiveness, either. My grandfather's law is a strain of the Calvinism that flourishes in the Deerfield church, where, in the graveyard outside, he and his father lie beneath an eighteen-foot gray stone slab (Arthur's head at C.F.'s feet), and where there are two plots set aside for my father and mother, and more space, if I want it, for me. ♦

1925: THE YEAR IT ALL BEGAN

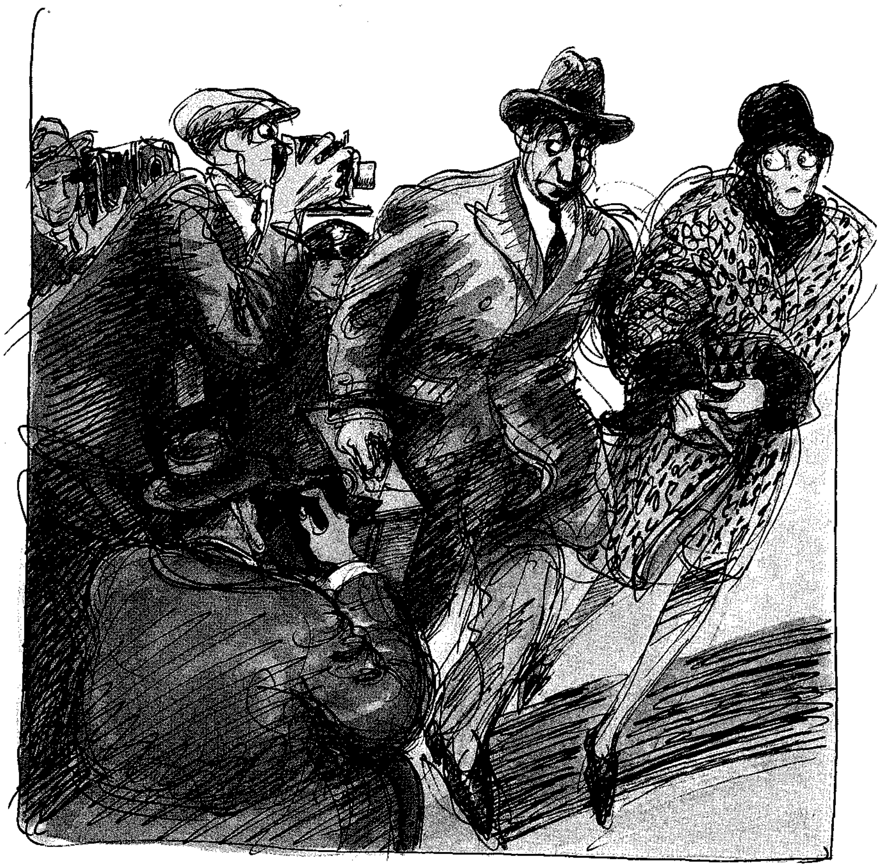
by Edward Sorel



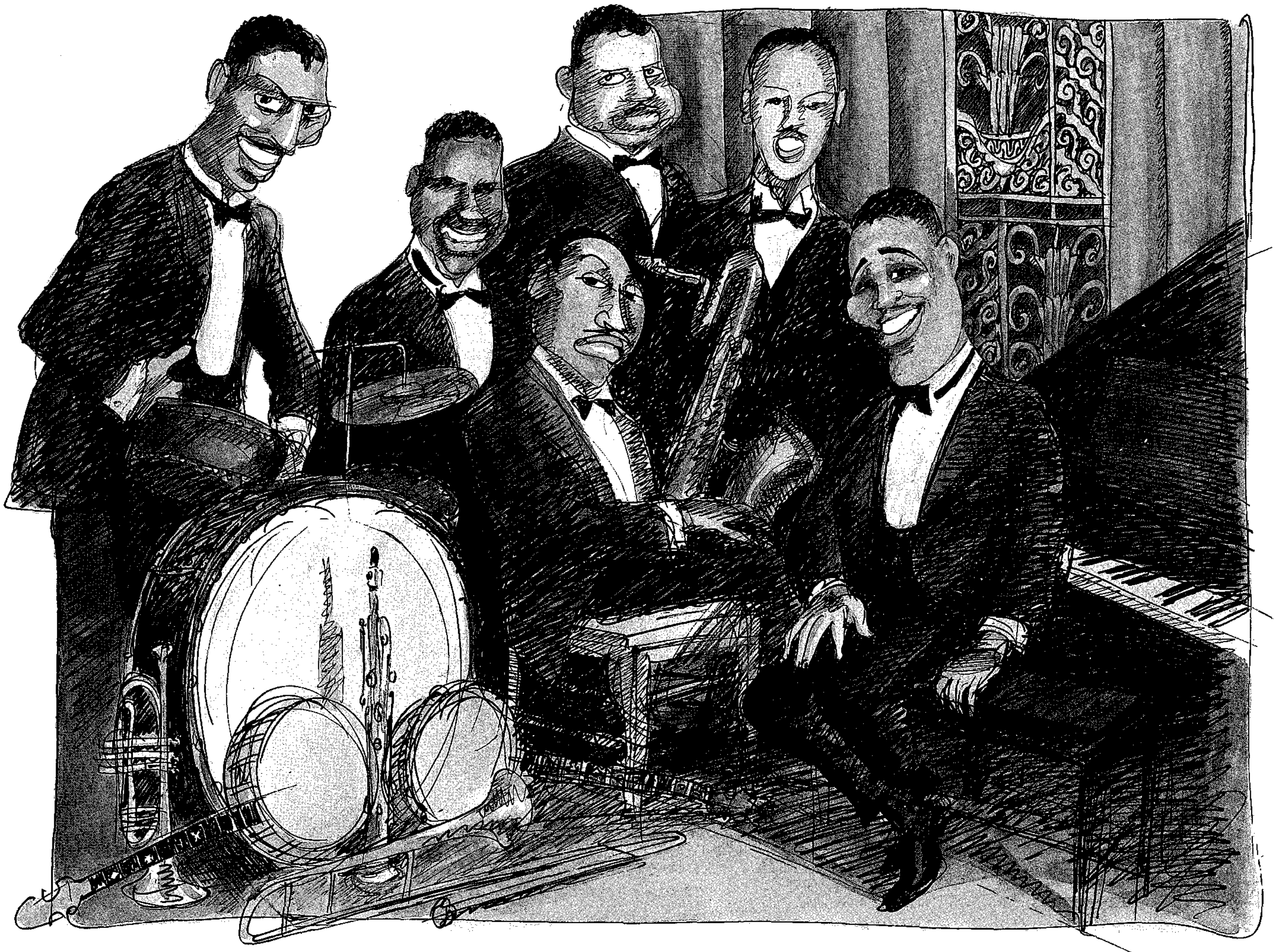
MAYOR-TO-BE JIMMY WALKER AND HIS WIFE AT THE POLLS.



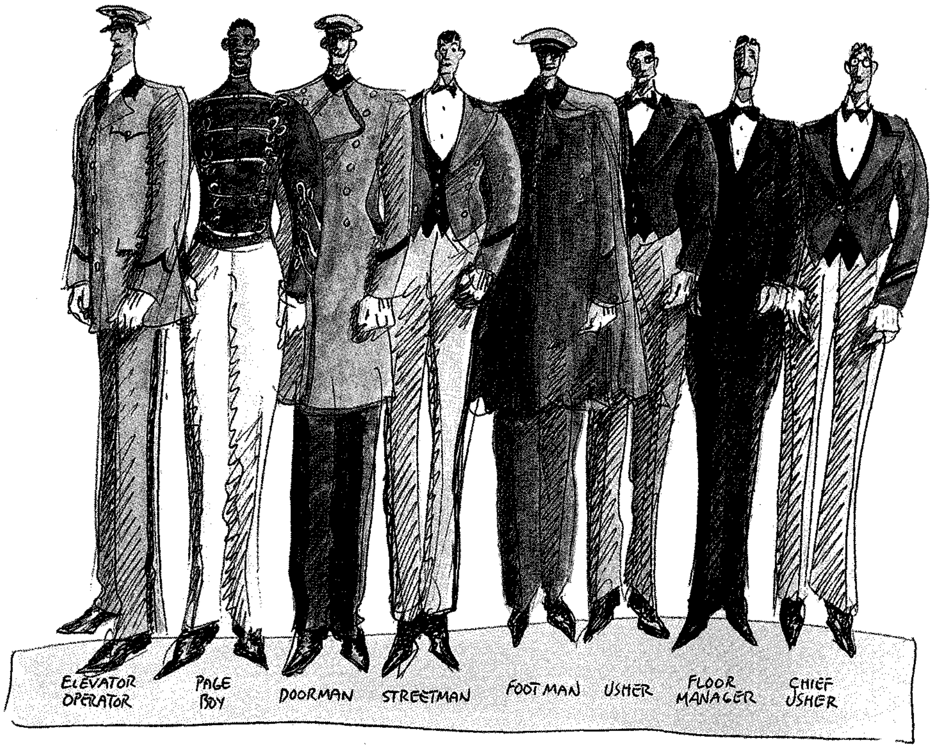
THE MOST EAGERLY AWAITED PLAY OF THE SEASON WAS MICHAEL ARLEN'S DRAMATIZATION OF HIS BEST-SELLING NOVEL, "THE GREEN HAT," WHOSE HEROINE, IRIS MARCH, HAD BECOME A MODEL FOR YOUNG SOPHISTICATES. KATHARINE CORNELL AND LESLIE HOWARD GAVE GOOD PERFORMANCES, BUT THE CRITICS PUT THE KIBOSH ON THE PLAY.



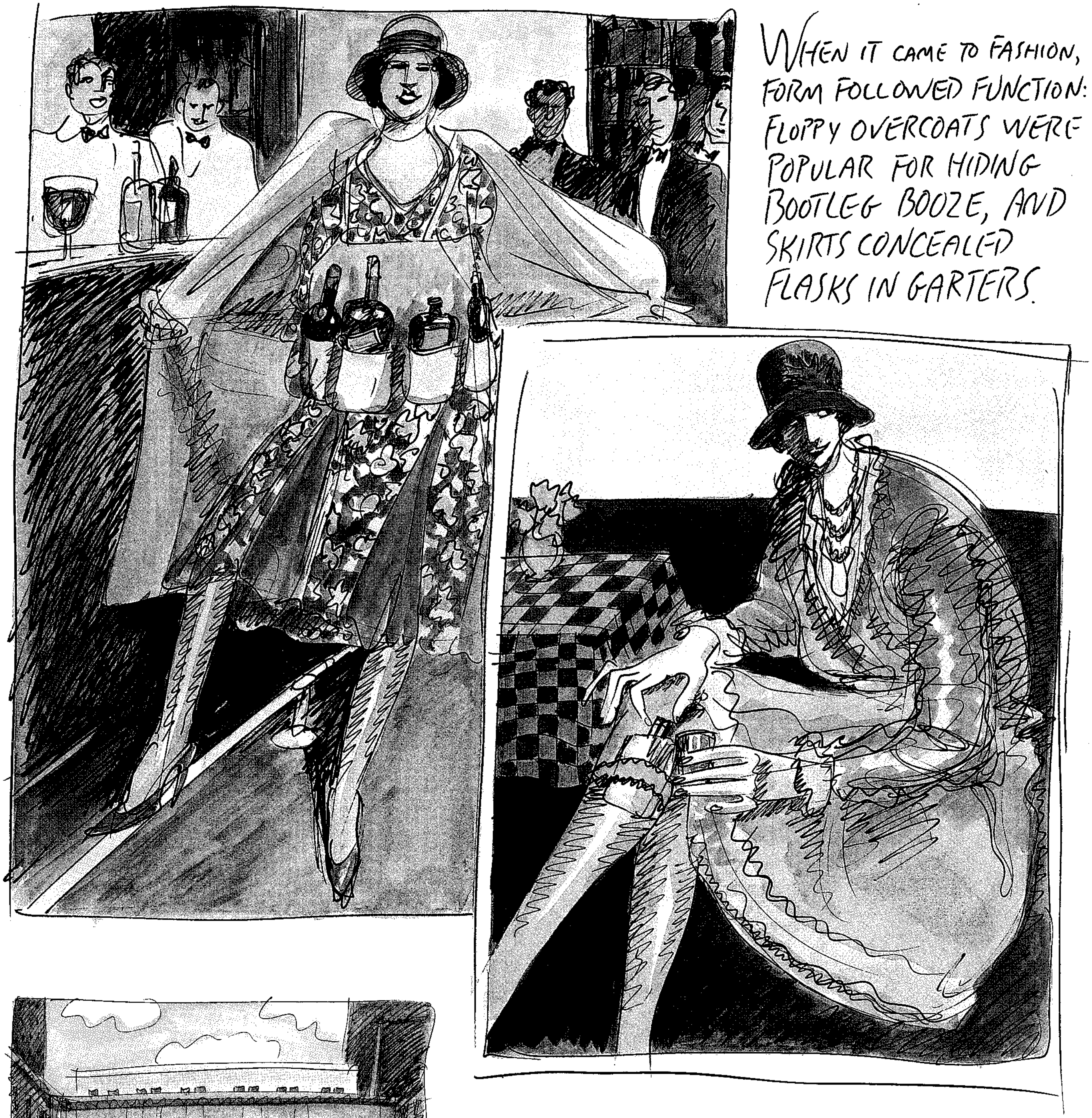
THE TABLOID PRESS – AN INVENTION OF THE TWENTIES – CLOSELY FOLLOWED THE ROMANCE BETWEEN IRVING BERLIN AND THE SOCIALITE ELLIN MACKAY. WHEN, IN JUNE, 1925, VARIETY DESCRIBED THE COUPLE AS "BETROTHED," CLARENCE MACKAY SWORE THAT THE SONGWRITING JEW WOULD MARRY HIS DAUGHTER "ONLY OVER MY DEAD BODY." THE MIRROR AND THE GRAPHIC DOGGED THE LOVERS, AND WERE ON HAND WHEN THEY FINALLY ELOPED.



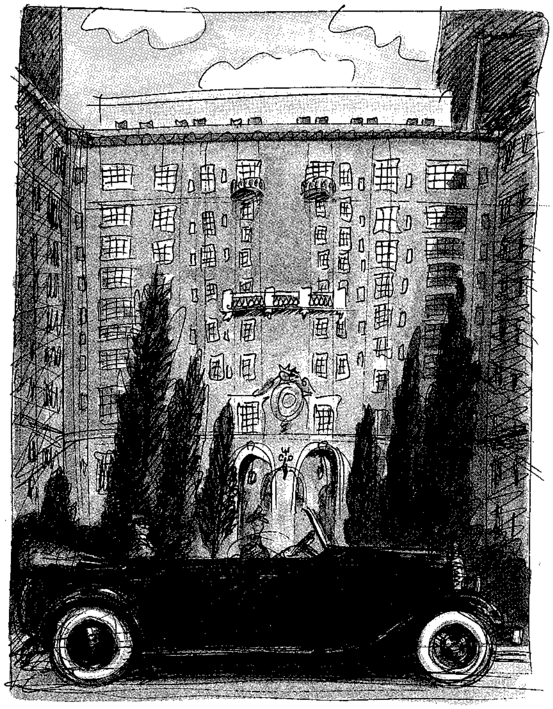
Fashionable New Yorkers went "slumming" up in Harlem, the home of the Cotton Club and Barron's Cabaret, where Duke Ellington and his Washingtonians played. That's Sonny Greer on drums.


Elevator Operator
Page Boy
Doorman
Streetman
Footman
Usher
Floor Manager
Chief Usher

The vast, opulently decorated Paramount, at Broadway and 43rd Street, was still not completed by the end of the year. When it opened, it deployed a militia-like staff to perform maneuvers between shows.



WHEN IT CAME TO FASHION, FORM FOLLOWED FUNCTION: FLOPPY OVERCOATS WERE POPULAR FOR HIDING BOOTLEG BOOZE, AND SKIRTS CONCEALED FLASKS IN GARTERS.



THE PLACE TO LIVE — IF YOU HAD VERY DEEP POCKETS — WAS THE HECKSHER APARTMENTS, WHICH OPENED IN 1924. THE BUILDING, ON THE EAST SIDE OF PARK AVENUE BETWEEN 47TH AND 48TH STREETS, ENCOMPASSED A LANDSCAPED DRIVE-IN COURTYARD ALMOST HALF THE SIZE OF GRAMERCY PARK. THE CAR IN THE FOREGROUND IS A CHRYSLER, WHICH MADE ITS DÉBUT THE SAME YEAR AS THE HECKSHER.

FICTION

SCARVES, BEADS, SANDALS

BY MAVIS GALLANT

AFTER three years, Mathilde and Theo Schurz were divorced, without a mean thought, and even Theo says she is better off now, married to Alain Poix. (Or "Poids." Or "Poisse." Theo may be speaking the truth when he says he can't keep in mind every facet of the essential Alain.) Mathilde moved in with Alain six months before the wedding, in order to become acquainted with domestic tedium and annoying habits, should they occur, and so avoid making the same mistake (marriage piled onto infatuation) twice. They rented, and are now gradually buying, a two-bedroom place on Rue Saint-Didier, in the Sixteenth Arrondissement. In every conceivable way it is distant from the dispiriting south fringe of Montparnasse, where Theo continues to reside, close to several of the city's grimmest hospitals, and always under some threat or other—eviction, plagues of mice, demolition of the whole cul-de-sac of sagging one-story studios. If Theo had been attracted by her "physical aspect"—Mathilde's new, severe term for beauty—Alain accepts her as a concerned and contributing partner, intellectually and spiritually. This is not her conclusion. It is her verdict.

Theo wonders about "spiritually." It sounds to him like a moist west wind, ready to veer at any minute, with soft alternations of sun and rain. Whatever Mathilde means, or wants to mean, even the idea of the partnership should keep her fully occupied. Nevertheless, she finds time to drive across Paris, nearly every Saturday afternoon, to see how Theo is getting along without her. (Where is Alain? In close liaison with a computer, she says.) She brings Theo flowering shrubs from the market on Île de la Cité, still hoping to enliven the blighted yard next to the studio, and food in covered dishes—whole, delicious meals, not Poix leftovers—and fresh news about Alain.

Recently, Alain was moved to a new office—a room divided in two, really, but on the same floor as the Minister and with part of an eighteenth-century fresco overhead. If Alain looks straight up, perhaps to ease a cramp in his neck, he can take in Apollo—just Apollo's head—watching Daphne turn into a laurel tree. Owing to the perspective of the work, Alain has the entire Daphne—roots, bark, and branches, and her small pink Enlightenment face peering through leaves. (The person next door has inherited Apollo's torso, dressed in Roman armor, with a short white skirt, and his legs and feet.) To Theo, from whom women manage to drift away, the situation might seem another connubial bad dream, but Alain interprets it as an allegory of free feminine choice. If he weren't so pressed with other work, he might write something along that line: an essay of about a hundred and fifty pages, published between soft white covers and containing almost as many colored illustrations as there are pages of print; something a reader can absorb during a weekend and still attend to the perennial border on Sunday afternoon.

He envisions (so does Mathilde) a display on the "recent nonfiction" table in a Saint-Germain-des-Prés bookshop, between stacks of something new about waste disposal and something new about Jung. Instead of writing the essay, Alain applies his trained mind and exacting higher education to shoring up French values against the Anglo-Saxon mud slide. On this particular Saturday, he is trying to batter into proper French one more untranslatable expression: "airbag." It was on television again the other day, this time spoken by a woman showing black-and-white industrial drawings. Alain would rather take the field against terms that have greater resonance, are more blatantly English, such as "shallow" and "bully" and "wishful thinking," but no one, so far, has ever tried to use them in a commercial.

So Mathilde explains to Theo as she sorts his laundry, starts the machine, puts clean sheets on the bed. She admires Theo, as an artist—it is what drew her to him in the first place—but since becoming Mme. Poix she has tended to see him as unemployable. At an age when Theo was still carrying a portfolio of drawings up and down and around Rue de Seine, looking for a small but adventurous gallery to take him in, Alain has established a position in the cultural apparat. It may even survive the next elections: he is too valuable an asset to be swept out and told to find a job in the private sector. Actually, the private sector could ask nothing better. Everyone wants Alain. Publishers want him. Foreign universities want him. Even America is waiting, in spite of the uncompromising things he has said about the hegemony and how it encourages well-bred Europeans to eat pizza slices in the street.

Theo has never heard of anybody with symbolic imagery, or even half an image, on his office ceiling outlasting a change of government. The queue for space of that kind consists of one ravenous human resource after the other, pushing hard. As for the private sector, its cultural subdivisions are hard up for breathing room, in the dark, stalled between floors. Alain requires the clean horizons and rich oxygen flow of the governing class. Theo says none of this. He removes foil from bowls and dishes, to see what Mathilde wants him to have for dinner. What can a Theo understand about an Alain? Theo never votes. He has never registered, he forgets the right date. All at once the campaign is over. The next day familiar faces, foxy or benign, return to the news, described as untested but eager to learn. Elections are held in spring, perhaps to make one believe in growth, renewal. One rainy morning in May, sooner or later, Alain will have to stack his personal files, give up Apollo and Daphne, cross a Ministry courtyard on the first lap of a march into the private sector. Theo sees him

FILIP PAGOWSKI

stepping along cautiously, avoiding the worst of the puddles. Alain can always teach, Theo tells himself. It is what people say about aides and assistants they happen to know, as the astonishing results unfold on the screen.

ALAIN knows Theo, of course. Among his mixed feelings, Alain has no trouble finding the esteem due to a cultural bulwark: Theo and his work have entered the enclosed space known as "time-honored." Alain even knows about the Poids and Poisse business, but does not hold it against Theo; according to Mathilde, one no longer can be sure when he is trying to show he has a sense of humor or when he is losing brain cells. He was at the wedding, correctly dressed, suit, collar, and tie, looking distinguished—something like Braque at the age of fifty, Alain said, but thinner, taller, blue-eyed, lighter hair, finer profile. By then they were at the reception, drinking champagne under a white marquee, wishing they could sit down. It was costing Mathilde's father the earth—the venue was a restaurant in the Bois de Boulogne—but he was so thankful to be rid of Theo as a son-in-law that he would have hired Versailles, if one could.

The slow, winding currents of the gathering had brought Theo, Alain, and Mathilde together. Theo with one finger pushed back a strayed lock of her hair; it was reddish gold, the shade of a persimmon. Perhaps he was measuring his loss and might even, at last, say something embarrassing and true. Actually, he was saying that Alain's description—blue-eyed, etc.—sounded more like Max Ernst. Alain backtracked, said it was Balthus he'd had in mind. Mathilde, though not Alain, was still troubled by Theo's wedding gift, a botched painting he had been tinkering with for years. She had been Mme. Poix for a few hours, but still felt responsible for Theo's gaffes and imperfections. When he did not reply at once, she said she hoped he did not object to being told he was like Balthus. Balthus was the best-looking artist of the past hundred years, with the exception of Picasso.

Alain wondered what Picasso had to do with the conversation. Theo looked nothing like him: he came from Alsace. He, Alain, had never understood the way women preferred male genius incarnated as short, dark, and square-shaped. "Like Celtic gnomes," said Theo, just to fill in. Mathilde saw the roses in the restaurant garden through a blur which was not the mist of happiness. Alain had belittled her, on their wedding day, in the presence of her first husband. Her first husband had implied she was attracted to gnomes. She let her head droop. Her hair slid over her cheeks, but Theo, this time, left it alone. Both men looked elsewhere—Alain because tears were something new, Theo out of habit. The Minister stood close by, showing admirable elegance of manner—not haughty, not familiar; careful, kind, like the Archbishop of Paris at a humble sort of funeral, Theo said, thinking to cheer up Mathilde. Luckily, no one overheard. Her mood was beginning to draw attention. Many years before, around the time of the Algerian War, a relative of Alain's mother had married an aunt of the Minister. The outer rims of the family circles had quite definitely overlapped. It was the reason the Minister had come to the reception and why he had stayed, so far, more than half an hour.

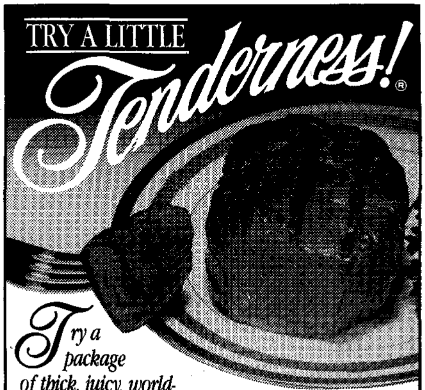
Mathilde was right; Theo must be losing brain cells at a brisk rate now. First Celtic gnomes, then the Archbishop of Paris; and, of course, the tactless, stingy, offensive gift. Alain decided to smile, extending greetings to everyone. He was attempting to say, I am entirely happy on this significant June day. He was happy, but not entirely. Perhaps Mathilde was recalling her three years with Theo and telling herself nothing lasts. He wished Theo would do something considerate, such as disappear. A cluster of transparent molecules, the physical remainder of the artist T. Schurz, would dance in the sun, above the roses. Theo need not be dead—just gone.

"Do you remember, Theo, the day we got married," said Mathilde, looking up at the wrong man, by accident intercepting the smile Alain was using to reassure the Minister and the others. "Everybody kept saying we had made a mistake. We decided to find out how big a mistake it was, so in the evening we went to Montmartre and had our palms read. Theo was told he could have been an artist but was probably a merchant seaman. His left hand was full of little shipwrecks." She may have been waiting for Alain to ask, "What about you? What did your hand say?" In fact, he was thinking just about his own. In both palms he had lines that might be neat little roads, straight or curved, and a couple of spidery stars.

AT first, Theo had said he would give them a painting. Waiting, they kept a whole wall bare. Alain supposed it would be one of the great recent works; Mathilde thought she knew better. Either Alain had forgotten about having carried off the artist's wife or he had decided it didn't matter to Theo. That aside, Theo and Theo's dealer were tight as straitjackets about his work. Mathilde owned nothing, not even a crumpled sketch saved from a dustbin. The dealer had taken much of the earlier work off the market, which did not mean Theo was allowed to give any away. He burned most of his discards and kept just a few unsalable things in a shed. Speaking of his wedding gift, Theo said the word "painting" just once and never again: he mentioned some engravings—falling rain or falling snow—or else a plain white tile he could dedicate and sign. Mathilde made a reference to the empty wall. A larger work, even unfinished, even slightly below Theo's dealer's exacting standards, would remind Mathilde of Theo for the rest of her life.

Five days later, the concierge at Rue Saint-Didier took possession of a large oil study of a nude with red hair—poppy red, not like Mathilde's—prone on a bed, her face concealed in pillows. Mathilde recognized the studio, as it had been before she moved in and cleaned it up. She remembered the two reproductions, torn out of books or catalogues, askew on the wall. One showed a pair of Etruscan figures, dancing face to face, the other a hermit in a landscape. When the bed became half Mathilde's, she took them down. She had wondered if Theo would mind, but he never noticed—at any rate, never opened an inquiry.

"Are you sure this thing is a Schurz?" said Alain. Nothing else bothered him. He wondered, at first, if Theo had found the picture at a junk sale and had signed it as a joke. The true gift, the one they were to cherish and display, would come along later, all the more to be admired because of the scare. But Theo



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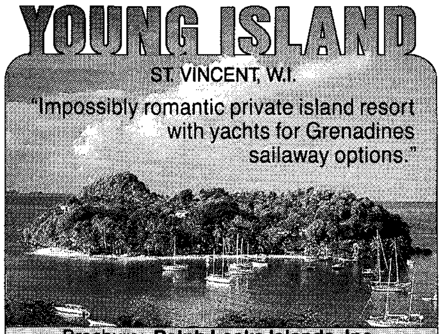

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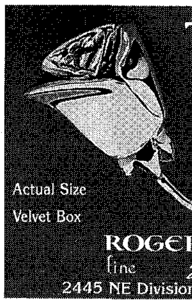

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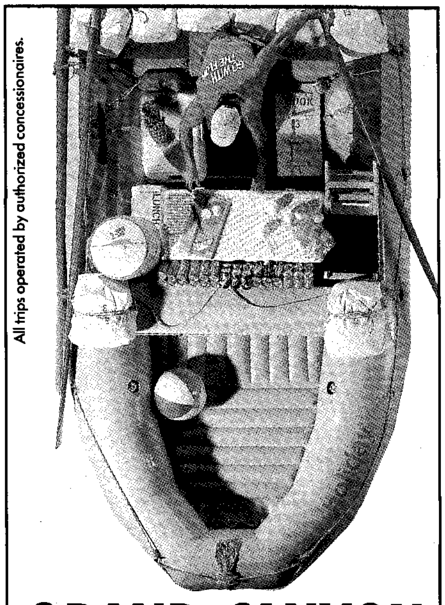
never invented jokes; he blundered into them.

"I am not that woman," Mathilde said. Of course not. Alain had never supposed she was. There was the crude red of the hair, the large backside, the dirty feet, and then the date—"1979"—firm and black and in the usual place, to the right of "T. Schurz." At that time, Mathilde was still reading translations of Soviet poetry, in love with a teacher of Russian at her lycée, and had never heard of "T. Schurz." In saying this, Alain showed he remembered the story of her life. If she'd had a reason to forgive him, about anything, she would have absolved him on the spot; then he spoiled the moment by declaring that it made no difference. The model was not meant to be anyone in particular.

Mathilde thought of Emma, Theo's first long-term companion (twelve years), but by '79 Emma must have been back in Alsace, writing cookery books with a woman friend. Julita (six years) fit the date but had worn a thick yellow braid down her back. She was famous for having tried to strangle Theo, but her hands were too small—she could not get a grip. After the throttling incident, which had taken place in a restaurant, Julita had packed a few things, most of them Theo's, and moved to the north end of Paris, where she would not run into him. Emma left Theo a microwave oven, Julita a cast-iron cat, standing on its hind legs, holding a tray. She had stolen it from a stand at the flea market, Theo told Mathilde, but the story sounded unlikely: the cat was heavy to lift, let alone be fetched across a distance. Two people would have been needed; perhaps one had been Theo. Sometimes, even now, some old friend from the Julita era tells Theo that Julita is ill or hard up and that he ought to help her out. Theo will say he doesn't know where she is or else, yes, he will do it tomorrow. She is like art taken off the market now, neither here nor there. The cat is still in the yard, rising out of broken flowerpots, empty bottles. Julita had told Theo it was the one cat that would never run away. She hung its neck with some amber beads Emma had overlooked in her flight, then pocketed the amber and left him the naked cat.

When Mathilde was in love with Theo and jealous of women she had never met, she used to go to an Indian



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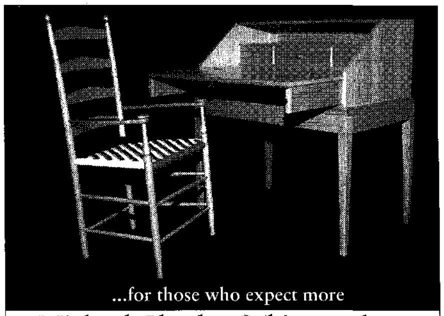

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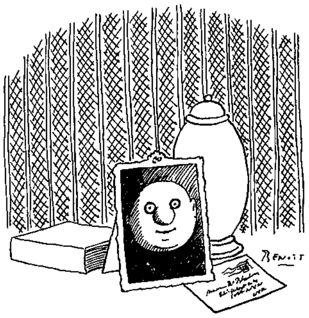
shop, in Montparnasse, where first Emma, then Julita had bought their flat sandals and white embroidered shifts and long gauzy skirts, black and pink and indigo. She imagined what it must have been like to live, dress, go to parties, quarrel, and make up with Theo in the seventies. Emma brushed her brown hair upside down, to create a great drifting mane. A woman in the Indian store did Julita's braid, just because she liked Julita. Mathilde bought a few things, skirts and sandals, but never wore them. They made her look alien, bedraggled, like the Romanian Gypsy women begging for coins along Rue de Rennes. She did not want to steal from a market or fight with Theo in bistros. She belonged to a generation of women who showed a lot of leg and kept life smooth, tight-fitting, close-woven. Theo was right: she was better off with Alain.

Still, she had the right to know something about the woman she had been offered as a gift. It was no good asking directly; Theo might say it was a journalist who came to tape his memoirs or the wife of a Lutheran dignitary or one of his nieces from Alsace. Instead, she asked him to speak to Alain; out of aesthetic curiosity, she said, Alain acquired the facts of art. Theo often did whatever a woman asked, unless it was important. Clearly, this was not. Alain took the call in his office; at that time, he still had a cubicle with a bricked-up window. Nobody recalled who had ordered the bricks or how long ago. He worked by the light of a neon fixture that flickered continually and made his eyes water. Summoned by an aide to the Minister, on propitious afternoons by the Minister himself (such summonses were more and more frequent), he descended two flights, using the staircase in order to avoid a giddy change from neon tube to the steadier glow of a chandelier. He brought with him only a modest amount of paperwork. He was expected to store everything in his head.



Theo told Alain straight out that he had used Julita for the pose. She slept much of the day and for that reason made an excellent model: was never tired, never hungry, never restless, never had to break off for a cigarette. The picture had not worked out and he had set it aside. Recently he had looked at it again and decided to alter Julita from the neck up. Alain thought he had just been told something of consequence; he wanted to exchange revelations, let Theo know he had not enticed Mathilde away but had merely opened the net into which she could jump. She had grabbed Theo in her flight, perhaps to break the fall. But Alain held still; it would be unseemly to discuss Mathilde. Theo was simply there, like an older relative who has to be considered and mollified, though no one knows why. There was something flattering about having been offered an unwanted and unnecessary explanation; few artists would have bothered to make one. It was as though Theo had decided to take Alain seriously. Alain thanked him.

Unfortunately, the clarification had made the painting even less interesting than it looked. Until then, it had been a dud Schurz but an honest vision. The subject, a woman, entirely womanly, had been transfigured by Schurz's reactionary visual fallacy (though honest, if one accepted the way his mind worked) into a hefty platitude; still, it was art. Now, endowed with a name and, why not, an address, a telephone number, a social-security number, and a personal history, Theo's universal statement dwindled to a footnote about Julita—second long-term companion of T. Schurz, first husband of Mathilde, future first wife of Alain Poix. A white tile with a date and a signature would have shown more tact and common sense.

All this Alain said to Mathilde that night, as they ate their dinner next to the empty wall. Mathilde said she was certain Theo had gone to considerable trouble to choose something he believed they would understand and appreciate and that would enhance their marriage. It was one of her first lies to Alain: Theo had gone out to the shed where he kept his shortfalls and made a final decision about a dead loss. Perhaps he guessed they would never hang it and so damage his reputation, although as a rule he never imagined future behavior more than a few minutes away. Years ago, in a bistro on Rue Stanislas, he had

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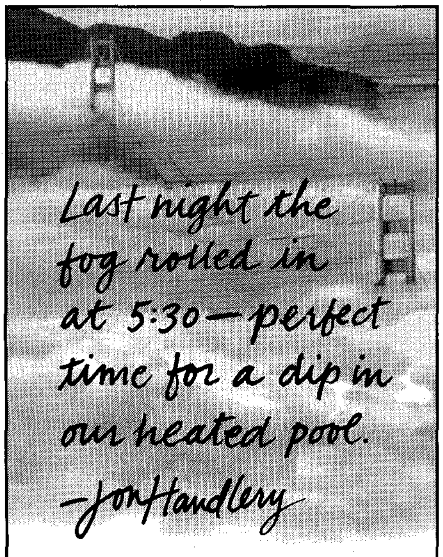

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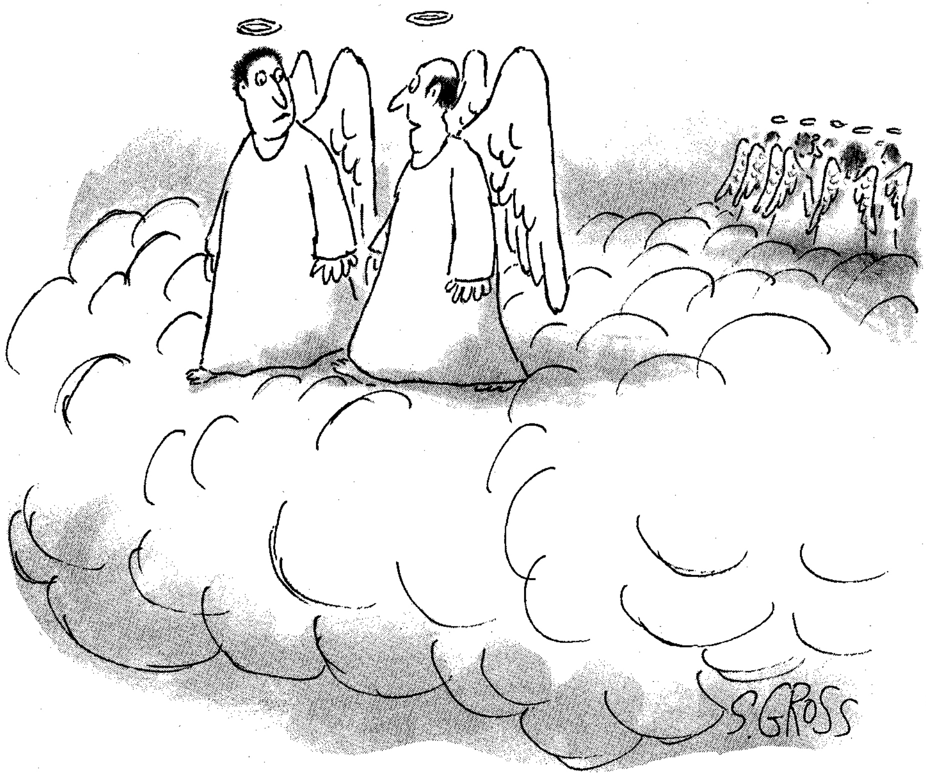


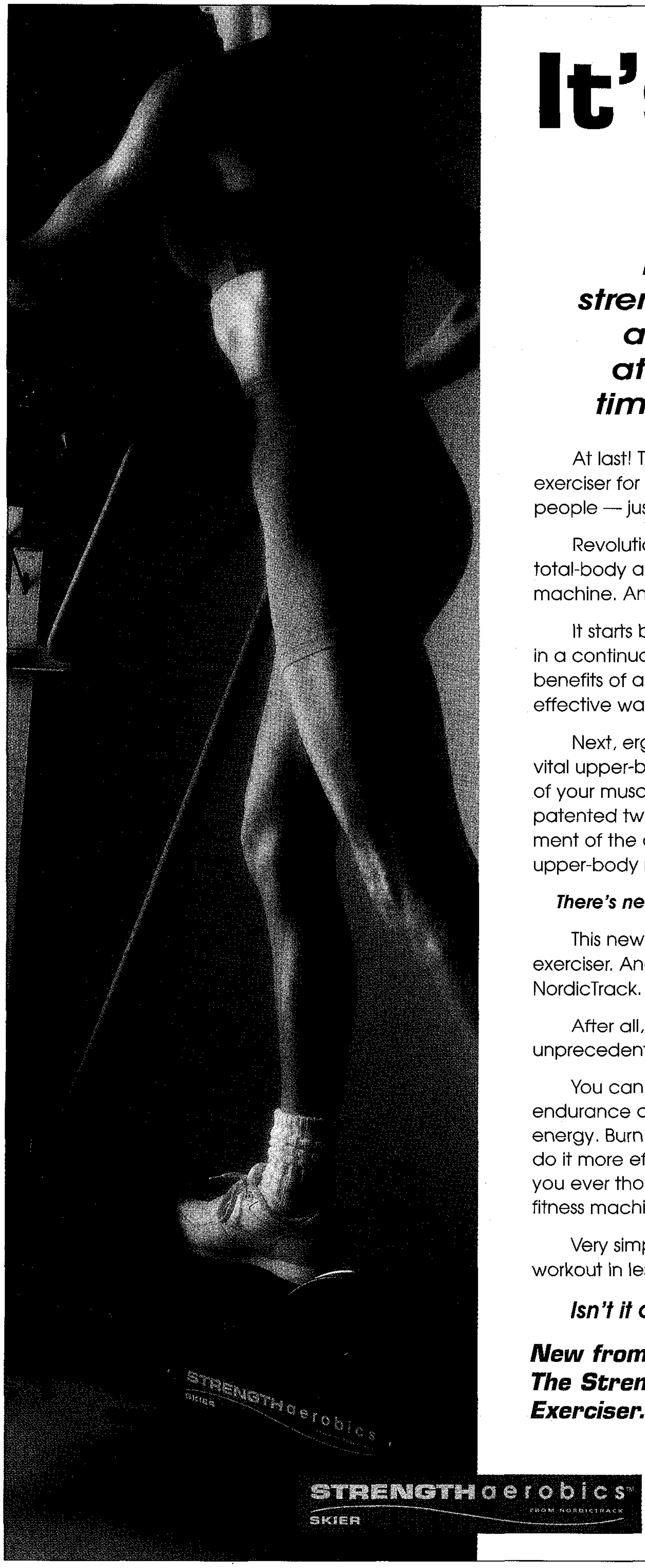
"That's the first time I've heard 'My Way' played on a harp."

• •

drawn a portrait of Julita on the paper tablecloth, signed and dated it, torn it off, even made the edges neat. It was actually in her hands when he snatched it back, ripped it to shreds, and set the shreds on fire in an ashtray. It was then that Julita had tried to get him by the throat.

YESTERDAY, Friday, an April day, Theo was awakened by a hard beam of light trained on his face. There was a fainter light at the open door, where the stranger had entered easily. The time must have been around five o'clock. Theo could make out an outline, drawn in gray chalk: leather jacket, close-cropped head. (Foreign Legion deserter? Escaped prisoner? Neo-Nazi? Drugs?) He spoke a coarse, neutral, urban French—the old Paris accent was dying out—and told Theo that if he tried to move or call he, the intruder, might hurt him. He did not say how. They all watch the same programs, Theo told himself. He is young and he repeats what he has seen and heard. Theo had no intention of moving and there was no one to call. His thoughts were directed to the privy, in the yard. He hoped the young man would not take too long to discover there was nothing to steal, except a small amount of cash. He would have told him where to find it, but that might be classed as calling out. His checkbook was in a drawer of Emma's old desk, his bank card behind the snapshot of Mathilde, propped on the shelf above the sink. The checkbook was no good to the stranger, unless he forced Theo to sign all the checks. Theo heard him scuffing about, heard a drawer being pulled. He shut his eyes, opened them to see the face bent over him, the intent and watchful expression, like a lover's, and the raised arm and the flashlight (probably) wrapped in one of Mathilde's blue-and-white tea towels.

He came to in full daylight. His nose had bled all over the pillows, and the mattress was sodden. He got up and walked quite steadily, barefoot, over the stones and gravel of the yard; returning to the studio, he found some of yesterday's coffee still in the pot. He heated it up in a saucepan, poured in milk, drank, and kept it down. Only when that was done did he look in a mirror. He could hide his blackened eyes behind sunglasses but not the raw bruise on his forehead or his swollen nose. He



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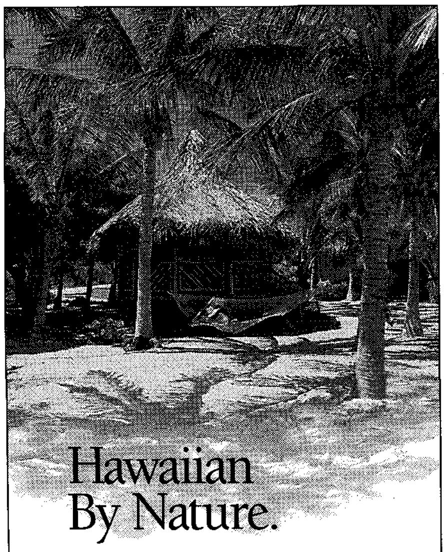

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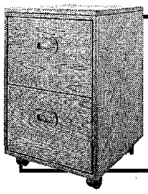

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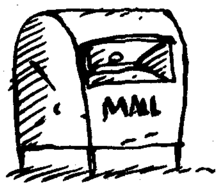
dragged the mattress outside and spread it in the cold April sunlight. By four o'clock, Mathilde's announced arrival time—for it seemed to him today could be Saturday—the place was pretty well cleaned up, mattress back on the bed, soiled bedclothes rolled up, pushed in a corner. He found a banquet-size tablecloth, probably something of Emma's, and drew it over the mattress. Only his cash had vanished; the checkbook and bank card lay on the floor. He had been attacked, for no reason, by a man he had never seen before and would be unable to recognize: his face had been neutral, like his voice. Theo turned on the radio and, from something said, discovered this was still Friday, the day before Mathilde's habitual visiting day. He had expected her to make the mattress dry in some magical and efficient, Mathilde-like way. He kept in the shed a couple of sleeping bags, for rare nights when the temperature fell below freezing. He got one of them out, gave it a shake, and spread it on top of the tablecloth. It would have to do for that night.



Today, Saturday, Mathilde brought a meal packed in a black-and-white bag from Fauchon: cooked asparagus, with the lemon-and-oil sauce in a jar, cold roast lamb, and a gratin of courgettes and tomatoes—all he has to do is turn on Emma's microwave—a Camembert, a round loaf of that moist and slightly sour bread, from the place on Rue du Cherche-Midi, which reminds Schurz of the bread of his childhood, a carton of thick cream, and a bowl of strawberries, washed and hulled. It is too early for French strawberries. These are from Spain, picked green, shipped palely pink, almost as hard as radishes, but they remind one that it is spring. Schurz barely notices seasons. He works indoors. If rain happens to drench the yard when he goes outside to the lavatory, he puts on the Alpine beret that was part of his uniform when he was eighteen and doing his military service.

Mathilde, moving out to live with Alain, took with her a picture of Theo from that period, wearing the beret and the thick laced-up boots and carrying the heavy skis that were standard issue. He skied and shot a rifle for eighteen months, even thought he might have made it a permanent career, if that was all there was to the Army. No one had yet fallen in love with him, except perhaps his mother. His life was simple then, has grown simpler now. The seasons mean nothing, except that green strawberries are followed by red. Weather means crossing the yard bareheaded or covered up.

Mathilde has noticed she is starting to think of him as "Schurz." It is what his old friends call Theo. This afternoon, she had found him looking particularly Schurz-like, sitting on a chair he had dragged outside, drinking tea out of a mug, with the string of the tea bag trailing. He had on an overcoat and the regimental beret. He did not turn to the gate when she opened it or get up to greet her or say a word. Mathilde had to walk all round him to see his face.

"My God, Schurz, what happened?"

"I tripped and fell in the dark and struck my head on the cat."

"I wish you'd get rid of it," she said.

She took the mug from his hands and went inside, to unpack his dinner and make fresh tea. The beret, having concealed none of the damage, was useless now. He removed it and hung it rakishly on the cat, on one ear. Mathilde returned with, first, a small folding garden table (her legacy), then with a tray and teacups and a teapot and a plate of sliced gingerbread, which she had brought him the week before. She poured his tea, put sugar in, stirred it, and handed him the cup.

She said, "Theo, how long do you think you can go on living here, alone?" (It was so pathetic, she rehearsed, for Alain. Theo was like a child; he had made the most absurd attempt at covering up the damage, and instead of putting the mattress out to dry he had turned the wet side down and slept on top of it, in a sleeping bag. Who was that famous writer who first showed signs of senility and incontinence on a bridge in Rome? I kept thinking of him. Schurz just sat there, like a guilty little boy. He caught syphilis when he was young and gave it to Emma; he said it was from a prostitute, in Montmartre, but I believe it was a married woman, the wife of the first collector to start buying his work. He can't stay there alone now. He simply can't. His checkbook and bank card were lying next to the trash bin. He must have been trying to throw them away.)

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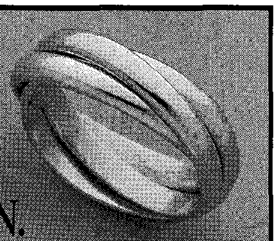

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Her picture had been on the floor, too, the one taken the day she married Theo. Mathilde has a small cloud of red-gold hair and wears a short white dress and a jacket of the eighties, with shoulders so wide that her head seems unnaturally small, like a little ball of reddish fluff. Theo is next to her, not too close. He could be a relative or a family friend or even some old crony who heard the noise of the party and decided to drop in. The photograph is posed here, in the yard. One can see a table laden with bottles, and a cement-and-stucco structure—the privy, with the door shut, for a change—and a cold-water tap and a bucket lying on its side. You had to fill the bucket and take it in with you.

Schurz never tried to improve the place or make it more comfortable. His reason was, still is, that he might be evicted at any time. Any month, any day, the police and the bailiffs will arrive. He will be rushed off the premises, with just the cast-iron cat as a relic of his old life.

"I'll tell you what happened," he said, showing her his mess of a face. "Yesterday morning, while I was still asleep, a man broke in, stole some money, and hit me with something wrapped in a towel. It must have been his flashlight."

(Oh, if you had heard him! she continued to prepare for Alain. A comic-strip story. The truth is he is starting to miss his footing and to do himself damage, and he pees in his sleep, like a baby. What kind of doctor do we need for him? What sort of specialist? A geriatrician? He's not really old, but there's been the syphilis, and he has always done confused and crazy things, like giving us that picture, when we really wanted a plain, pure tile.)

Schurz at this moment is thinking of food. He would like to be handed a plate of pork *ragoût* with noodles, swimming in gravy; but nobody makes that now. Or stewed eels in red wine, with the onions cooked soft. Or a cutlet of venison, browned in butter on both sides, with a purée of chestnuts. What he does not want is clear broth with a poached egg in it, or any sort of a salad. When he first came to Paris the cheapest meals were the heartiest. His mother had said, "Send me a Paris hat," not meaning it; though perhaps she did. His money, when he had any, went to

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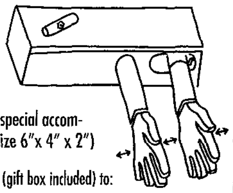

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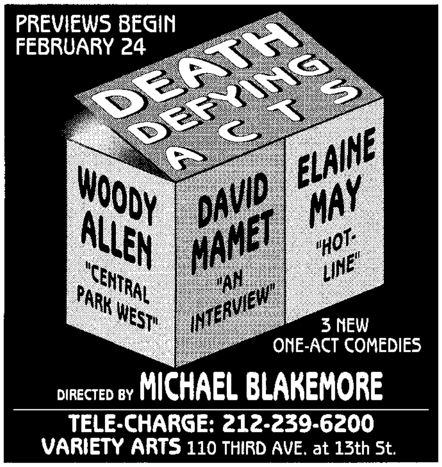
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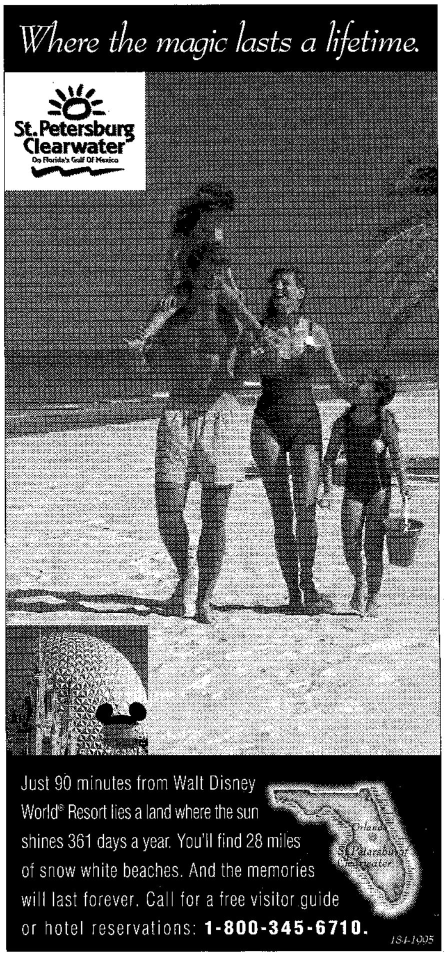
Only old women wore hats now. There were hats in store windows, dusty windows, in narrow streets—black hats, for funerals and widows. But no widow under the age of sixty ever bought one. Young women wore hats at the end of summer, tilted straw things, that they tried on just for fun. When they took the hats off, their hair would spring loose. The face, freed of shadow, took on a different shape, seemed fuller, unmysterious, as bland as the moon. There was a vogue for bright scarves, around the straw hats, around the hair, wound around the neck along with strings of bright beads, loosely coiled—sand-colored or coral or a hard kind of blue. The beads cast colored reflections on the skin of a throat or on a scarf of a different shade, like a bead diluted in water. Schurz and his friends ate cheap meals in flaking courtyards and on terraces where the tables were enclosed in a hedge of brittle, unwatered shrubs. Late at night, the girls and young women would suddenly find that everything they had on was too tight. It was the effect of the warm end-of-summer night and the food and the red wine and the slow movement of the conversation. It slid without wavering from gossip to mean gossip to art to life-in-art to living without boundaries. A scarf would come uncoiled and hang on the back of a chair or a twig of the parched hedge; as it would hang, later, over the foot of someone's bed. Not often Schurz's (not often enough), because he lived in a hotel near the Café Mabillon, long before all those places were renovated and had elevators put in and were given a star in some of the guidebooks. A stiff fine had to be paid by any client caught with a late-night visitor. The police used to patrol small hotels and knock on doors just before morning, looking for French people in trouble with the law and for foreigners with fake passports and no residence permits. When they found an extra guest in the room, usually a frantic young woman trying to pull the sheet over her face, the hotelkeeper was fined, too, and the tenant thrown out a few hours later. It was not a question of sexual morality but just of rules.

When dinner was almost finished, the women would take off their glass beads and let them drop in a heap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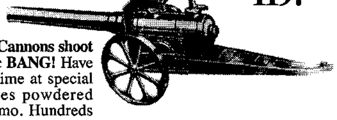
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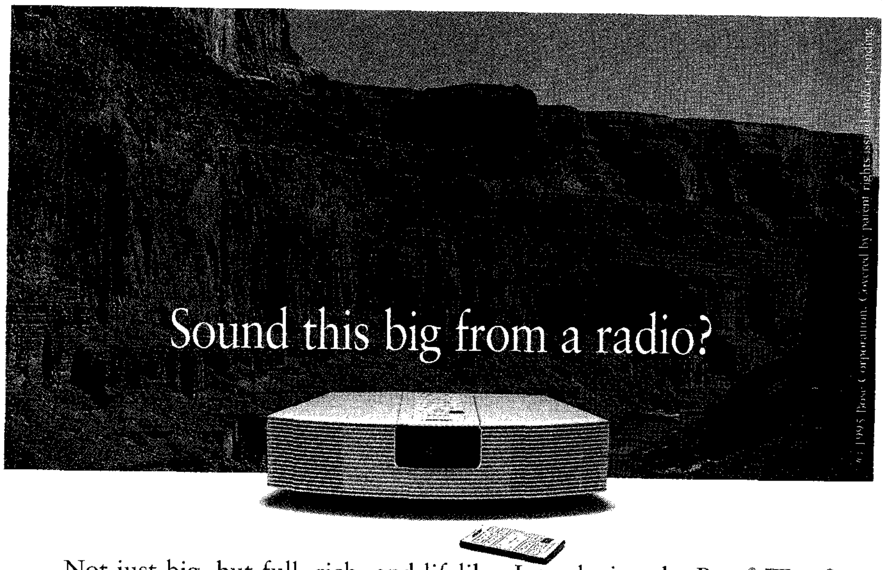
among the ashtrays and coffee cups and on top of the wine stains and scribbled drawings. Their high-heeled sandals were narrow and so tight that they had to keep their toes crossed; and at last they would slip them off, unobserved, using first one foot, then the other. Scarfless, shoeless, unbound, delivered, they waited for the last wine bottle to be emptied and the last of the coffee to be drunk or spilled before they decided what they specifically wanted or exactly refused. This was not like a memory to Theo but like part of the present time, something that unfolded gradually, revealing mysteries and satisfactions.

In the studio, behind him, Mathilde was making telephone calls. He heard her voice but not her words. On a late Saturday afternoon, she would be recording her messages on other people's machines: he supposed there must be one or two to doctors, and one for the service that sends vans and men to take cumbersome objects away, such as a soiled mattress. Several brief inquiries must have been needed before she could find Theo a hotel room, free tonight, at a price he would accept and on a street he would tolerate. The long unbroken monologue must have been for Alain, explaining that she would be much later than expected, and why. On Monday she would take Theo to the Bon Marché department store and make him buy a mattress, perhaps a whole new bed. Now here was a memory, a brief, plain stretch of the past: love apart, she had married him because she wanted to be Mme. T. Schurz. She would not go on attending parties and gallery openings as Schurz's young friend. Nobody knew whether she was actually living with him or writing something on his work or tagging along for the evening. She did not have the look of a woman who would choose to settle for a studio that resembled a garage or, really, for Schurz. It turned out she could hardly wait to move in, scrape and wax whatever he had in the way of furniture, whitewash the walls. She trained climbing plants over the wire fence outside, even tried to grow lemon trees in terra-cotta tubs. The tubs are still there.

She came toward him now, carrying the bag she had packed so that he would have everything he needed at the hotel. "Don't touch the bruise," she said, gen-



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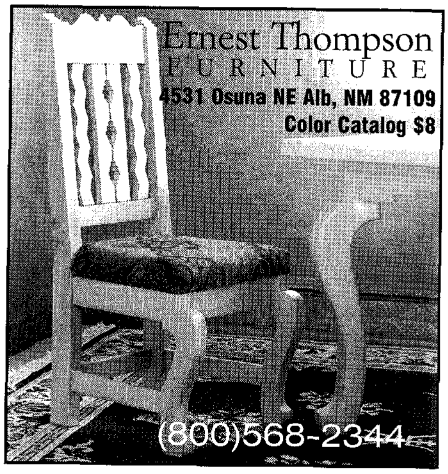
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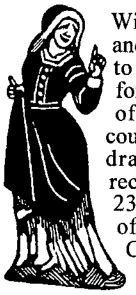

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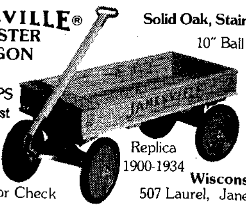

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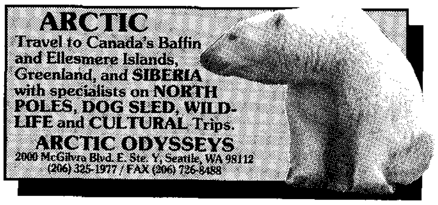
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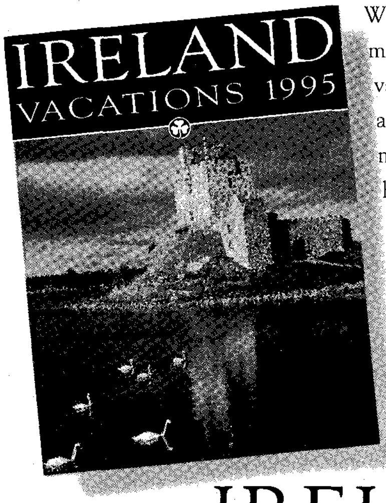

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tly, removing the hand full of small shipwrecks. The other thing she said today, which he is bound to recall later on, was "You ought to start getting used to the idea of leaving this place. You know that it is going to be torn down."

Well, it is true. At the entrance to the doomed and decaying little colony there is a poster, damaged by weather and vandals, on which one can still see a depiction of the structure that will cover the ruin, once it has finally been brought down: a handsome biscuit-colored multipurpose urban complex comprising a library, a crèche, a couple of municipal offices, a screening room for projecting films about Bedouins or whales, a lounge where elderly people may spend the whole day playing board games, a theatre for amateur and professional performances, and four low-rent work units for painters, sculptors, poets, musicians, and photographers. (A waiting list of two thousand names was closed some years ago.) It seems to Theo that Julita was still around at the time when the poster was put up. The project keeps running into snags—aesthetic, political, mainly economic. One day the poster will have been his view of the future for more than a third of his life.

Mathilde backed out of the cul-de-sac, taking care (he does not like being driven), and she said, "Theo, we are near all these hospitals. If you think you should have an X-ray at once, we can go to an emergency service. I can't decide, because I really don't know how you got hurt."

"Not now." He wanted today to wind down. Mathilde, in her mind, seemed to have gone beyond dropping him at his hotel. He had agreed to something on Rue Delambre, behind the Coupole and the Dôme. She was on the far side of Paris, with Alain. As she drove on, she asked Theo if he could suggest suitable French for a few English expressions: "divided attention" and "hard-driven" and "matchless perfection," the latter in one word.

"I hope no one steals my Alpine beret," he said. "I left it hanging on the cat."

Those were the last words they exchanged today. It is how they said goodbye. ♦

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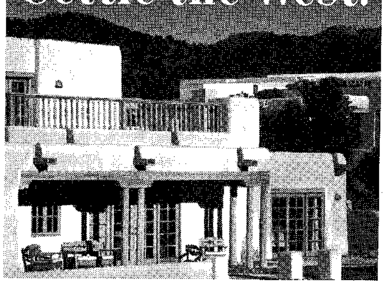

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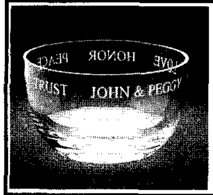

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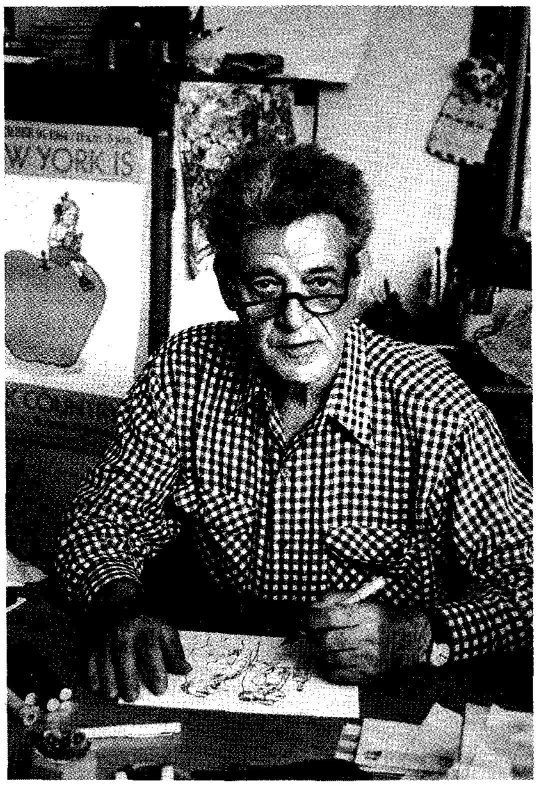
ONWARD AND UPWARD WITH THE ARTS

THE MINSTREL STEIG

This magazine's longest active contributor has achieved a triumphant parallel career as the author-artist of classic books for children.

BY ROGER ANGELL

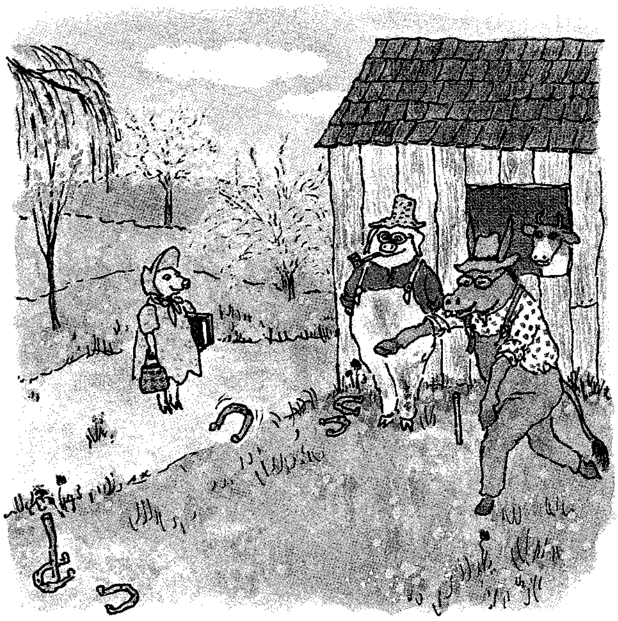
THE rule about age is never to think about it, so let us instead pack "two suitcases, the first with food, the second mostly with food," and be on our way. The travel tip comes from Zeke, a gifted young pig who leaves home in the middle of the night, upset because his harmonica-playing invariably puts his family to sleep—"out like a light, no matter how merry the music." The story is continued in "Zeke Pippin," a book for children published on November 14th, the day its author and illustrator, William Steig, turned eighty-seven. It was his twenty-fifth children's book since he first took up the work, a quarter century ago; almost all of them remain exuberantly in print, with several still popping up here and there in new editions and surprising languages—Hawaiian, say, or Xhosa—and with sales, foreign and domestic, that now total close to two million. Steig, of course, is this magazine's own William Steig, who sold his first drawing to *The New Yorker* in 1930 and his most recent one last month, which makes him our longest-running active contributor. The magazine has published sixteen hundred and fifty drawings of his and a hundred and seventeen covers, and there are more of each in the bank. He is probably still best known here for his extensive series "Small Fry," which concerned the rowdy doings and pleasures of inventive and pugnacious young boys and girls: street kids, for the most part, who all bore strong resemblance to one another—stubby and snub-nosed, with bright eyes and tough, tipped-up chins—and thus, inescapably, to Steig himself. His most celebrated cover, I imagine, is the one for May 9, 1953—a portrait of a five- or six-year-old boy artist, brush in hand, leaning against the runny, color-bursting tree he has just painted, under a yellow-ray sun that would make van Gogh squint: Kid Steig forever.



THOMAS VICTOR/TIME MAGAZINE

Most of Steig's art, though, has been for and about adults, and it has not always been lighthearted. In some of the cartoons, men and women yell and quarrel, snap at their kids, glare inkily at each other from old armchairs. In one drawing, a sour-looking widow standing in front of a gravestone, her mouth open and her finger in the air, is continuing the argument. Other Steig people, alone and captionless, stare out at the reader from faces that are masks or Rorschach blobs or blotter lines; the style is hard to describe, because it keeps changing, sometimes almost from week to week. Courtship and love (and plenty of lust) turn up, mostly in classical guise: broad-hipped nymphs, tattered knights, satyrs, men as roosters, lions as kings. Everyone seems to have dressed up, in the child's sense of the word, perhaps in hope of more fun. Animals and flowers and masks abound, but almost sadly. The titles of some of Steig's collections sound like warnings: "The Lonely Ones," "Ruminations," "Strutters and Fretters," "Our Miserable Life." It's amazing how different, how direct and open Steig is when he turns to the difficulties and adventures of children.

Not children *exactly*. In most of the books, one notices, the dramatis personae are boys and girls in disguise—junior pigs, mice, dogs, geese, donkeys, and frogs—with parents (in coats and pants, hats and dresses) of the same breed; and before long the switch, which looks only charming at first, takes on a more useful purpose. "I realized that I could get crazier with animals and have them do stranger things," Steig said not long ago. "And I put them in clothes, as other writers have done."



Launched by Bill Steig's free-flowing pen, Pearl, of "The Amazing Bone," happily sets sail (above and on the following pages) on dire and colorful adventures.

©1976 WILLIAM STEIG, PUBLISHED BY FARRAR, STRAUS & GIROUX, INC.

Steig's heroes and heroines, young and innocent as they appear, keep running into appalling obstacles and troubles. Roland (of "Roland the Minstrel Pig") is almost garrotted, narrowly misses being crushed by a boulder, and then is strung up from a tree limb. Sylvester, a donkey, is turned into a rock. Amos (the mouse in "Amos and Boris") falls overboard in mid-ocean, and Boris (a whale, *ibid.*) is stranded on a beach by a hurricane. Abel, the mouse hero of "Abel's Island," is marooned for a year, and Pearl, a very young pig in "The Amazing Bone," is nearly cooked and served (with a nice green salad) by a fox. So it goes, but these small critters remain valorous, and they come through in the end. Survival, we begin to understand, is the main event. These animals aren't just sweet; they're tough and active and optimistic. They love to get going. They're battlers.

Dominic, the eponymous dog hero of Steig's picaresque novel, carries a spear and routs the rascally Doomsday Gang again and again. When he's buried in a deep hole, with the foxy and ferrety gang members licking their chops up above, he starts to dig his way out at once. "Working away, he was happy he had gone out into the world to seek his fortune. So many interesting things to do! With four sets of claws and the spear, and a bountiful supply of energy, he burrowed a long tunnel away from the hole and under the crowded roots of a large tree. Then he worked his way upward to the surface."

I AM a father of children who are widely separated in age, thanks to a second marriage, and when, in the mid-nineteen-seventies, my wife and I first took turns reading aloud "Sylvester and the Magic Pebble" and "Amos and Boris" and "Caleb & Kate" and "Farmer Palmer's Wagon Ride" to our young son, I sometimes felt a brief pang for my daughters, who were by then well into their twenties, because they'd come along too early to get that firsthand, child's-eye view of such treasures. Is

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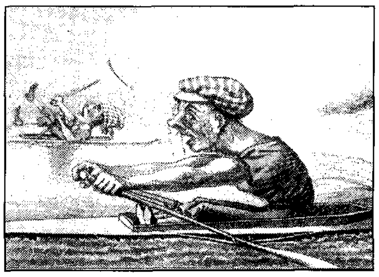

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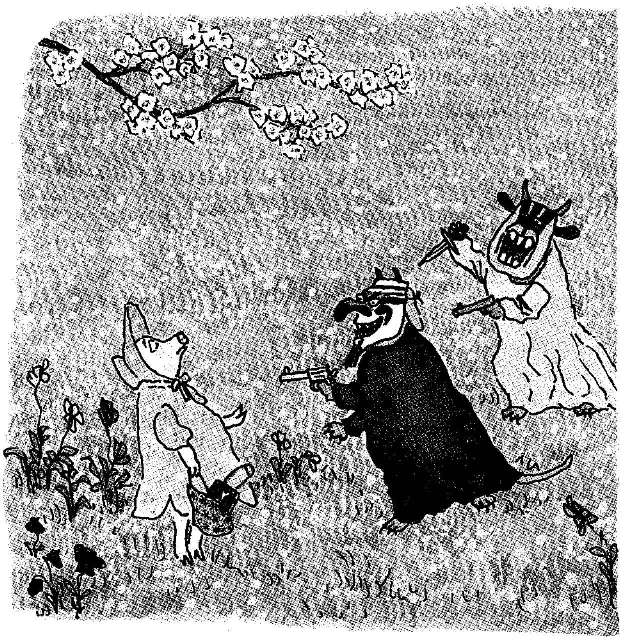
there a word for this phenomenon—"postchronism," or some such? It's like being sorry for Sophocles' audiences because they missed out on "The Tempest," or pitying the monks who first stared up at the freshly painted Giotto frescoes in the Basilica of St. Francis in Assisi because they never got to think about Cézanne. It is my own view that we dismiss children's literature too readily, perhaps because young readers are always poised to move along to the next stage, but also because we suspect that anything that appeals so strongly and pleasurably to us, as parents, is too easy to be taken seriously. How many of us do not still believe in our secret hearts that with a little luck we could have played major-league baseball or written a first-class children's book. Dream on.



Many friends of mine, I discovered, have kept the Steig books on a special shelf in their memories even after the prime consumers of the books have grown up. Mention a title or a hero to them, and their faces light up. "They're so *clear!*" is a common response, and the erstwhile reader-aloud sounds no different from a contemporary young parent in the midst of the same happy experience. "I think Elizabeth loved 'Gorky Rises' best," a newspaper editor said to me the other day, speaking of her eight-year-old and an intrepid Steigian frog aviator. "All that floating and zooming around."

Other friends recalled Steig himself, along with the books; there seemed to be no dividing line. Warren Miller, a younger colleague of Steig's at the magazine, and himself the illustrator of two works for children, said, "I love his books. I remember him years and years ago, in the Village. I'd be playing my trumpet in some jazz cellar and I'd see him sitting over in the corner, listening *intensely.*" Miller hunched over slightly and drew in his elbows. "You know, he's always paid such attention. And I like the writing in his books almost as much as the illustrations. There's one phrase I've never forgotten, from 'Amos and Boris,' when the whale is stranded on the beach—"

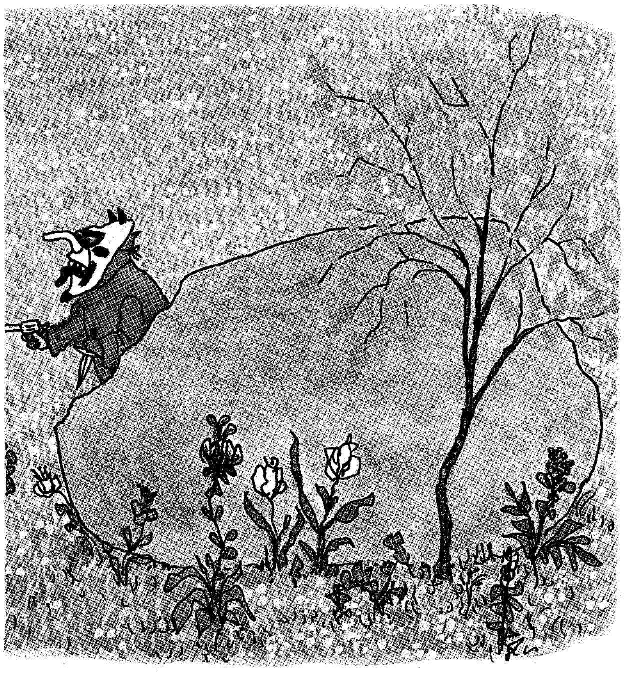
" 'Breaded with sand,' " I said, breaking in.

"That's it!" he cried. " 'Breaded with sand'—what a writer!"

Frank Modell, a *New Yorker* artist and children's-book writer who is a little closer in age to Steig than the others I talked to, said, "He's always worn dark clothes and sneakers. Even among the artists, he was informal. I always felt that he stood aside from the rest of us and watched. He and I used to live near each other in the Village—he had a place just off Sixth Avenue. I was there one day when he suddenly told me that he liked his apartment better than mine. I was living on Ninth Street then, in a ninth-and-tenth-floor apartment that had a terrace and a view, so I was surprised. Steig drew me to a window in his place and pointed, and then I realized that we were on the second floor and that what he saw, just below us, was men and women and kids and dogs and traffic going by. It was as if he had a television set that brought in the whole world."

IN Steig's books, clarity and comedy feel as easily conjoined as words and pictures, and a little magic sometimes helps as well. In "The Amazing Bone," the garrulous object that Pearl puts in her pocket previously belonged to a witch, from whom it picked up almost more powers than it knows what to do with. After it has disposed of that gourmet fox, it stays on with her and her family: "Pearl always took it to bed when she retired, and the two chatterboxes whispered together until late in the night. Sometimes the bone put Pearl to sleep by singing, or by imitating soft harp music. . . . They all had music whenever they wanted it, and sometimes even when they didn't."

Foxes fare poorly in the *Steigwerk*, usually after a brief losing battle with their consciences. "I regret having to do this to you," the fox says to Pearl as he totes her toward the cookstove. "It's nothing personal." In "Doctor De Soto," the fox is grateful to the tiny mouse-dentist who has pulled his bad tooth. (The deft, white-smocked D.D.S. does the extraction with a winch, working, with his wife-hygienist, from the top of a tall ladder.) "I really shouldn't eat them," he muses. "On the other hand, how can I resist?" Fortunately, De Soto is a top mouse in his field, and he requires only the magic of science to handle the situation. Dentists can do anything these days.



Steig's second book, "Sylvester and the Magic Pebble," which won the Caldecott Medal (the most prestigious American prize for juvenile-book illustration) when it appeared, in 1969, is still his masterpiece. In the story, Sylvester, a young donkey, collects pebbles for a hobby and one day comes upon a strange red one, which has the power to grant him any wish. On the way home, he encounters a lion and saves himself by rashly wishing to turn into a rock. It happens, and then he is stuck—a rock in a field, with no way to wish himself back or to call out for help. He is searched for everywhere, mourned by his parents, almost forgotten, but then one day . . . The inexorable quiet of the tale is deepened by the simplicity of the underpopulated landscape illustrations: the rock that is Sylvester seen under a blazing firmament of stars; the rock in a winter snowstorm; the rock in the springtime. The text is just as spare: "Night followed day and day followed night over and over again. Sylvester on the hill woke up less and less often. . . . He felt he would be a rock forever and he tried to get used to it. He went into an endless sleep."

The book is about death, nothing less, but it is death in the way that young children first think about it. What can it be like to be still and not speak and never move again? Steig himself does not entirely agree with this interpretation. "I think Sylvester's being that rock has to do with his relations with his parents, too," he says. "Sylvester inside that rock is an armored creature, but when he realizes how loved he is, he can come back. Coming back to a family in the end is natural for kids. These things are symbolic, but never in a thought-out way."

Steig is an artist of sunlight (in contrast to Maurice Sendak, for instance, who is an artist of night), but he has a fondness for starry skies and the long thoughts of small creatures alone under the heavens. Amos, lying out on the deck of his sloop, the Rodent, thinks himself "a little speck of a living thing in the vast living universe," and then, "overwhelmed by the beauty and mystery of everything," rolls off his boat and into the sea. Dominic, off on his own

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adventures, is susceptible to moonlight, at one point forgetting his doggy daytime self to the point where he declares to the heavens, "Oh, Life, I am yours! Whatever it is you want of me, I am ready to give." It's all too much for him, and he falls into a good, long bout of howling.

"Dominic," which was Steig's seventh book, was an achievement of a different order. Encouraged by Michael di Capua, his editor at Farrar, Straus & Giroux, Steig set out to write a novel, rather than a book told largely through pictures, and he pulled it off with élan. It is illustrated with lively pen-and-ink instead of his customary watercolors, but the writing picks up the added burden without strain. It's a book for slightly older kids—to be read, perhaps, rather than read aloud—and part of why it works is that Steig never writes down, never patronizes his audience. The younger books are full of words ("discombobulated," "lunatic," "sinuous") that a parent may have to stop and explain; and in the books for, say, ten-year-olds, "palsied," "sequestration," "ensconced," "circumstantial," "rubescent," and the like show up, with no more than a trail of context to help out. Good writers and painters, I suspect, compliment their audiences by expecting only the best of them; the responding thrill of understanding is what art is all about.

It is clear that Steig's stories and small creatures speak for him. It's harder to say how his line and his opalescent watercolors do the same thing. Perhaps because he puts colors and inks directly on paper, with no preliminary sketches or pencillings, his paintings always feel as if he had just placed them in your hands. The Steigian palette and medium, in any case, shift freely from book to book, in response to each new story. "The Real Thief," his third—and shortest—novel, concerns a sentry goose wrongfully accused of stealing the royal jewels, and its darker tones, of injustice and suffering and forgiveness, are conveyed in ink and a gray watercolor wash. Pearl, of "The Amazing Bone," is Steig's youngest ingénue, scarcely more than a baby; the world is new and fresh to her, and what she sees are springtime swards of yellow, lavender, and the palest green. When she is accosted by a band of small brigands, possibly cats and dogs, they are wearing brilliantly colored Japanese masks.

"He's such an observant artist," Frank Modell said to me. "Everybody thinks that people with artistic ability can draw anything, but that isn't true. You can't draw a dog unless you know dogs. His pictures are full of things that other artists avoid—horses, dogs, rocks. He knows them all. Steig has never been afraid of being alone—you can tell that."

Lee Lorenz, Steig's *New Yorker* art editor and longtime colleague (and fellow children's-book writer, as well), says, "I don't know how he does it. You're never conscious of the medium, but it has occurred to me that the only romantic thing about him may be his colors. He's not circumspect, and his approach is so personal that you can't learn or borrow from him. You can only admire. Along with Arno, Addams, and Steinberg, he's one of the heroes around here."

There was an echo in this—a clang of considerable proportions. Just days before my conversation with Lee Lorenz, I had been talking with Mary Pope Osborne, who has written more than thirty books for children (she is also the president of the Authors Guild), and when I told her that I was writing a piece about Steig's children's works she said, "You know, he's been a hero for a whole generation of writers like me. Somehow, he managed to accomplish the feat of writing in a strange and different way that you instantly understood. I never knew how he did it. He helped me take chances with my own writing. For me, he's been like E. B. White and Arnold Lobel and James Marshall—the band of young people's writers that I always put together in my mind. I wanted to be in their company."

Late in December, I pressed a call on Bill Steig and his wife, Jeanne, at their roomy, sun-filled apartment in the Back Bay section of Boston; they moved there in 1992, giving up what had been their home for many years in Kent, Connecticut, after they reached an age when they foresaw that driving would become difficult. Steig says he does not miss Kent or country life at all. Jeanne is an artist, too, busy at the moment with a collection of small panels

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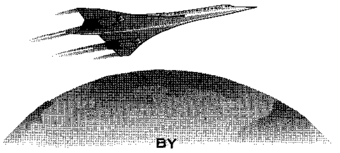
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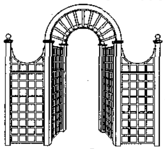
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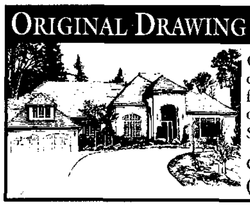
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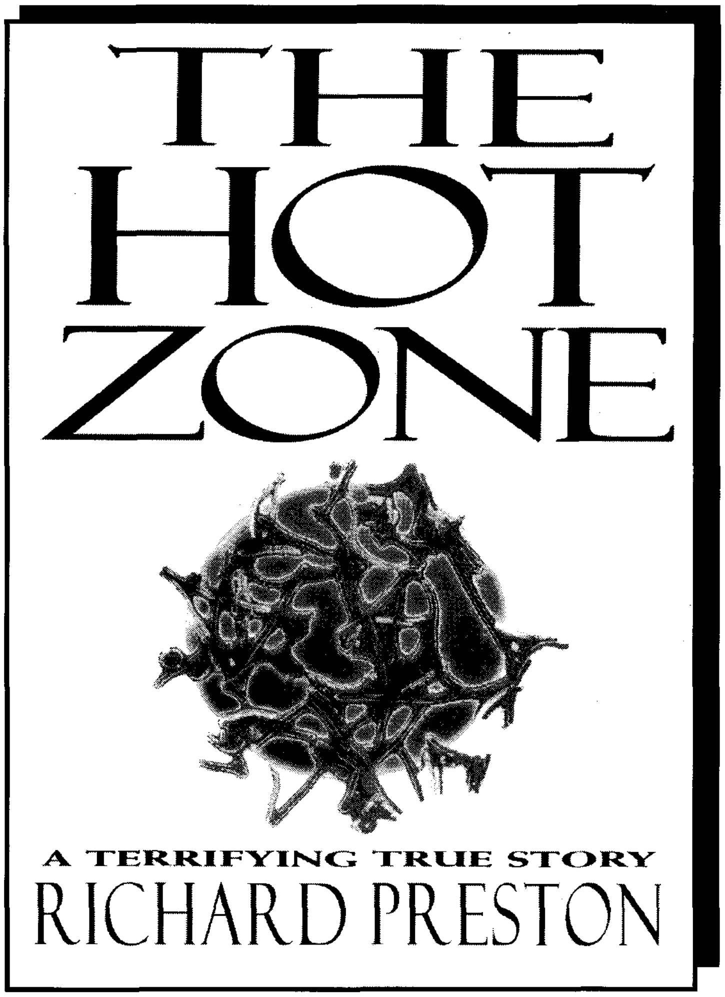

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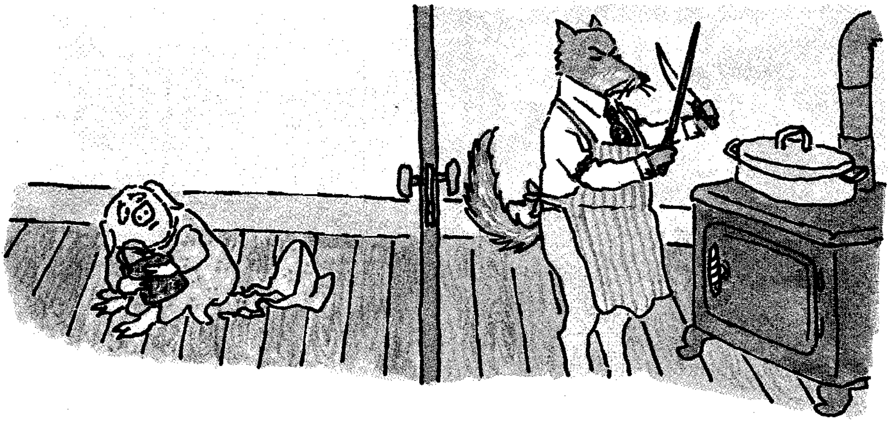
RANDOM HOUSE

Some of the contents of this book originally appeared in *The New Yorker.*

containing elegantly detailed near-Romanesque figures which she assembles from street-found bits of wood and metal. (She has also been a writer, supplying light-verse texts for three books that she and Bill did together.) Their place feels stuffed with art, but there's not much Bill Steig on the walls. "He won't have it—it makes him uneasy," Jeanne said. "He says his work is made to be reproduced." She did point out a couple of small, bright tapestries that have his unmistakable touch. "He had to have something to do while we were watching the Watergate hearings," she said. "He invented the stitching as he went along."

Bill Steig attended the National Academy of Design as a youth, but he claims not to have learned anything there. "I enjoyed playing touch football in the yard," he said. He is short and solid-looking, with blue eyes and a calm, workmanlike air. His hair, still in a boyish, upstanding brush, is gray now, but he doesn't look like a man in his eighties—or a man of any particular age. He looks like a student. He speaks quietly, in tentative sentences, sometimes throwing in an unexpected question or a fresh idea that imparts a swervy, back-roads feeling to the conversation.



"I like change," he said at one point. "But I try not to do it deliberately. I'm trying to have fun. I used to use different materials a lot—try thicker pens or brushes, or bamboo pens—with the idea that that'd make me change. If the pen stutters on the page, that's a new thing." He said that finishing drawings for the children's books was sometimes daunting for him, because he had to put the same characters down on the page again and again.

He got into children's books in the mid-sixties, at the urging of a fellow *New Yorker* artist, Bob Kraus, whose entrepreneurial fervor also inspired juvenile books from colleagues like Charles Addams, Whitney Darrow, and Lorenz. (Nowadays, *New Yorker* artists become children's-book authors in even greater numbers, and a stroll through the juvenile section of a bookstore can turn up works by the likes of Warren Miller, Ed Koren, Frank Modell, Roz Chast, and—in brilliant profusion—James Stevenson.) "Bob Kraus got me to write 'Roland,' which was great for me, because it got me out of advertising work," Steig said. "I was almost in my sixties and I was supporting a lot of people."

I said that family seemed to be a recurring chord in his books.

"I've always felt that family was a nuisance," he said. "My parents were very dependent—in fact, I supported them all my life. When I started working, instead of going out in the world I had to begin supporting my family. But I did it with good will."

Steig, who grew up in the Bronx and still carries a whisper of it in his consonants, was the third of four brothers. His father was a housepainter. After Steig finished writing "Dominic," it came to him one day that the spirit of its eager, adventurous hero was a portrait of his father. "I was never read to as a child," Steig told me, "but reading was big back then. We had no radio, no TV. The movies were big, too. We went to the Nickelettes—so called because you could get in for a nickel. There was one of them that would let two of you in for a nickel if you sat in the same seat. We used to go to the library—only we said 'liberry'—on Tremont Avenue, where they allowed

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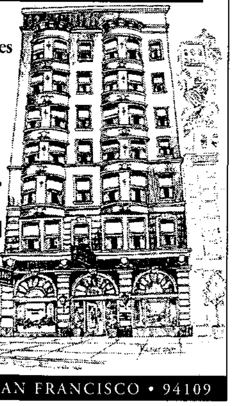

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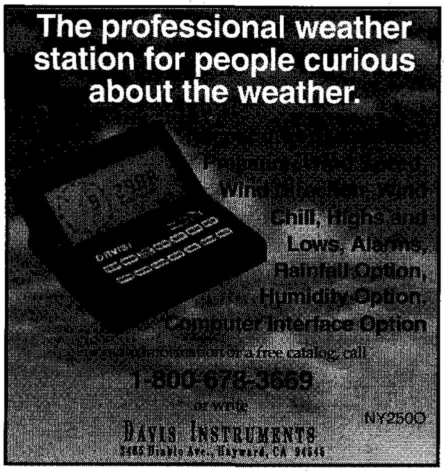

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you to take out two novels and two nonfiction books on each visit. Sometimes you tried to find a novel that *looked* like nonfiction, so you could beat the rule."

"Were you a street kid?" I asked.

"Sure, I was, along with the other guys in the Claremont A.C.," he said. "My part of the Bronx was between Crotona Park and Claremont Park, but the gang was just the boys who lived in our building. We were very small kids. We admitted a couple of girls later on—Sophie Kozanski and Pearl Bimlich—and then we called it the Claremont Athletic and Social Club."

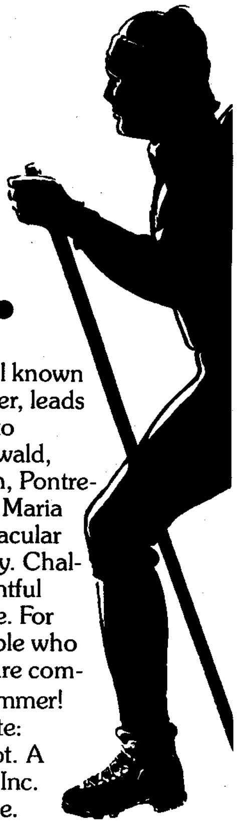
He seemed surprised when I said I felt that these kids seemed familiar to me, but then he brightened up and said, "Oh, yeah, sure—'Small Fry' came from all that. And maybe Pearl, in 'The Amazing Bone,' came from Pearl Bimlich. On the other hand, Jeanne and I had a dog named Pearl when we lived in Kent, a dog that died just before we moved up here." He paused, thinking it over. "Maybe the dog was named after Pearl Bimlich, too."

Steig, one notices, is never guarded in conversation but never loquacious; he seems unwilling to draw attention to himself by sounding wise or consequential. He said at one point that he had enjoyed writing "The Real Thief," because it dealt with more difficult and more adult ideas—his only book with a message. "Unfortunately, I made a mistake in it," he added at once. "The second half of it goes back in time and repeats the same events in a different context. It confuses things. I ran into the same thing once in a Conrad book I was reading—as an adult, I mean. Then I had to go and give kids the same problem. As somebody once said, you've got to remember that you're writing for kids—otherwise, you might end up writing 'War and Peace.' "

We had moved into the dining room by now, and the three of us were demolishing a luncheon salad, with beer and pickles and Italian bread on the side. Steig suddenly said, "Are you the kind of person who pays attention to birthdays and anniversaries?" It was one of his swerves.

I said yes, I was, and Jeanne, across from me, began to laugh. "Our an-

Hike the Alps.



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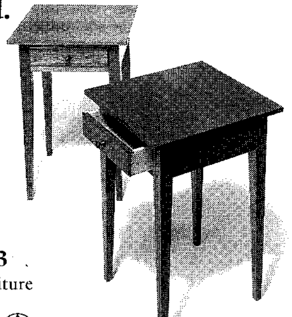

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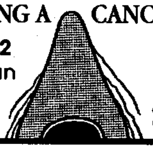

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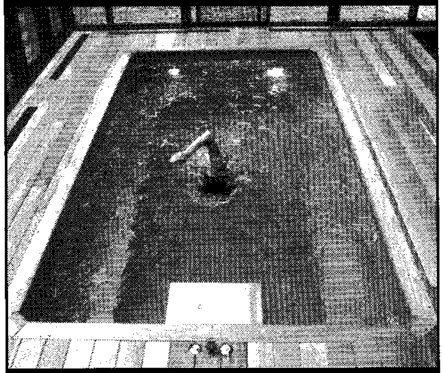

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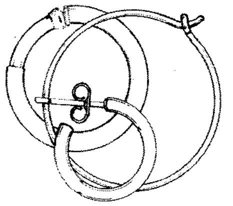

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niversary was yesterday," she said.

"I knew it was around the end of the year," Bill said cheerfully.

Jeanne broke the piece of bread she was holding in half and handed a morsel to him. "Happy anniversary, Bill," she said.

"What are your feelings about Picasso?" he asked me, chewing.

I did a quick inventory and ventured that he was clearly the premier artist of my lifetime—the right answer, I learned later on, because Picasso, another artist who thrived on change, has been Steig's artistic idol, his one and only. Steig once ended an extended friendship with a man who'd expressed some revisionist doubts about the Master.

I asked Steig about one or two other artists, including Ben Shahn, whose line seemed to me not unlike his own, but he dismissed them. "I'm a Stuart Davis lover," he said. "Did you know that he was one of the painters converted by the 1913 Armory Show? And Albert Ryder is a favorite. But I'm not so big on American painters, I guess."

"But we have artist friends," Jeanne said. She and Steig have been married since 1968, and their conversation, like that of many long-term couples, is full of comfortable continuations.

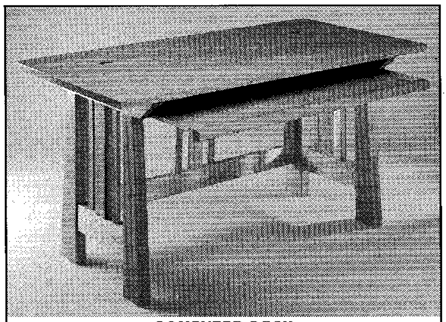
"Do you know Chuck Close?" Steig asked.

I said yes—well, I'd met him.

"A wonderful man," he said.

"Most of our friends now are relatives," Jeanne said, and the two finished the sentence together: "But not all of our relatives are friends!"

MY visit was flying away very quickly, and I did not want to overstay. Steig had told me that he suffers from emphysema, which saps his energy. "Some days, I go to my workroom and just do a crossword puzzle," he said. His attention, I noticed, did not weary, for our conversation had also ranged to sports (he misses the Giants—the New York football Giants—on television now that he's moved to Boston) and to his children: his son, Jeremy, a celebrated jazz flutist; and his daughters, Lucy, who is a psychologist and a painter, and Maggie, an actress now also employed as a party planner, who lives in Boston. Frank Modell had told me that he recalled Steig's talking about



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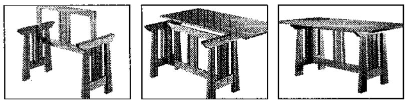

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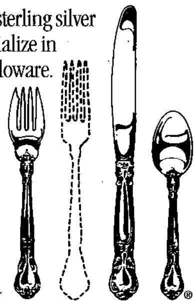

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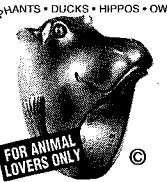

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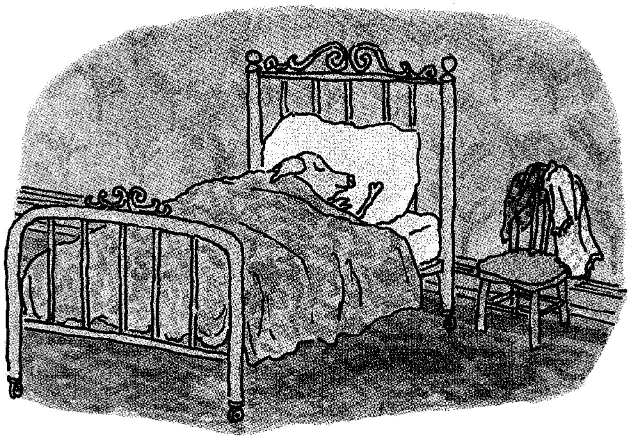
Jeremy one day, many years earlier, and saying, "My son is one of the nicest people I know." And Frank had said to me, "I wonder how many of us wish our fathers had ever thought something like that."

For Steig, apparently, the emotional and spiritual sectors of life were no farther away than the daily and offhand. I knew that he had been a patient of Wilhelm Reich, the Viennese radical psychologist, and he told me now that he still regularly climbed into his Orgone Accumulator, a metal-lined, telephone-booth-like container in his workroom, as part of the therapy to which he attributed his own long survival, as well as his mother's recovery, years before, from a serious cancer invasion. "I've been an ardent Reichean," he said. "Just the other day, I read somewhere that guys who think about the universe say that seventy-five per cent of it is still beyond their ken. Well, I think that seventy-five per cent is orgone, which, for some reason, we refuse to get in touch with."

The talk went back to his work. "Drawing is something I feel impelled to do, but I don't feel an undeniable urge to write these books," he said. "I've done more than I originally intended. It's not inspiration, but I take it seriously, writing for kids."

I asked the obligatory question. Was writing the books perhaps a way for him to remain a child?

"I enjoyed my childhood," he said. "I think I like kids more than the average man does. I can relax with them, more than I can among adults. I'm what you call shy—it's been a lifelong problem. Children are genuine, which is such a big problem with grownups. After we're about thirty, we have to give up being children. You can't try to stay young—that would make you old in no time—but I like to think I've kept a little innocence. Probably I'm too dumb to do anything else."



WHEN I got home that evening, I looked through my little stack of Steig books, and noticed once again how many different dedicatees there were. Jeanne was there, and so was Michael di Capua, and so, of course, were Steig's children and his two granddaughters, but the list seemed to grow from year to year and from book to book. "To Maggie, Melinda, Francesca, and Nika" was the dedication in "The Amazing Bone." The next book is "To Delia, Nika, Abigail, and Francesca," and the one after that "To Delia, Sidonie, Nika, Sylvain, and Estelle."

Jeanne had told me that she was part of a large, Chicago-based family that included a son and daughter of hers from an earlier marriage, four grandchildren, and also nieces and nephews and cousins in profusion, and she said that a number of these kids had been cited by Bill in his later books. The son of a woman who'd worked in a grocery store in Kent was in one of the books, and so was Chuck Close's daughter Maggie. Jeanne thinks that getting their names into Bill's books is almost a new fad or craze for kids. Bill, smiling, said that he'd begun to impose a visa system: three or four repeats and then you couldn't expect to find yourself in there anymore. But now, looking over the thin, different-shaped volumes, and the gatherings of names up at the front, I got the feeling that the message here was more complicated: real children climbing their way into books where they had so clearly and so often been made to feel interesting and important. "To Delia, Sidonie, Sylvain, Estelle, Kyle, Molly, Reid, Tina, Serena, Zachary and Zoe," and "To Alicia, Charlotte, Curran, Evan, Geneva, Georgia, Kate, Maggie and William." And others waiting. ♦

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BOOKS

AN OHIO RUNAWAY

A new collection reintroduces the works of Dawn Powell, the New York sophisticate who never lost her small-town sense of enchantment.

BY JOHN UPDIKE

THE reputation of Dawn Powell may be doomed to a perpetual state of revival. She is too good a fiction writer—too deft, funny, knowing, compassionate, and poetic—to be altogether forgotten yet not, in a sense, emblematic enough to be one of the permanent exhibits in the zoo of academically imposed American novelists. Hemingway, Faulkner, and Fitzgerald are the great flashing beasts of her era, with Sinclair Lewis and John Steinbeck lumbering unignorably beside; even Erskine Caldwell, Nathanael West, and Thornton Wilder have signature themes and tics to vivify them in a survey course. Dawn Powell might have found space in the anthologies had she been, like Katherine Anne Porter, Dorothy Parker, and Mary McCarthy, at her best in the short story. Though she did write short stories, including seven that appeared in this magazine between 1933 and 1940, even the best feel sketchy and not very hospitable; she needed the big canvas of the novel, with its room for multiple viewpoints and a lofty perspective, to express her sense of the world.

Born in Ohio in 1897, Powell belongs, in her own, lighter vein, with Theodore Dreiser and Willa Cather and those other Midwestern writers who felt something epic in the national shift from rural to urban, from provincial sequestration to metropolitan liberation. Her mother died when she was six, and her father was a travelling salesman; she and her two sisters were lodged with a variety of "very prim strict relatives," as she put it. Several times, Dawn ran away. "The best time to run away is September," she once wrote, and "There's something about farm life that gives you the strength to run anywhere in the world." When Dawn Powell was young, there was only one non-provincial place in America to run to: New York City. She came to New York in 1918, after graduating from Lake Erie College, in Painesville, Ohio, a few months before the Armistice. She was only twenty, and never ceased to be a patriotic New

Dawn Powell (center) at Billy Rose's Diamond Horseshoe. Her loyalty to New York was in effect a loyalty to the human roil.

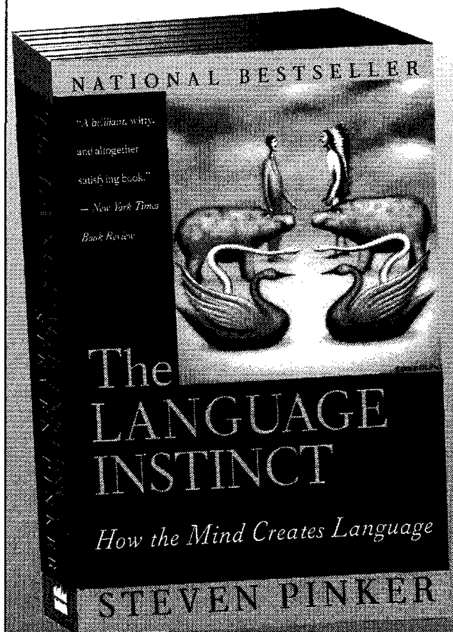
DAWN POWELL PAPERS, RARE BOOK & MANUSCRIPT LIBRARY, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Yorker. In 1931, she wrote her favorite cousin, Jack F. Sherman:

> New York City [is] the only place where people with nothing behind them but their wits can be and do everything. . . . What I mean, friend, is that you can be yourself here and it's the only place where being genuine will absolutely get you anywhere you want. . . . The very *best* people think to be able to do as you damn please, not caring what anyone thinks, is the mark of aristocracy.

These hearty avowals are quoted by Tim Page in his introduction to "Dawn Powell at Her Best," which he has edited and which Steerforth Press, of South Royalton, Vermont, has attractively published ($28). Although five of Powell's novels have been reissued in paperback since 1989, this is the first reissue in hardcover. The volume holds eight short stories, two novels—"Dance Night" and "Turn, Magic Wheel"—and a brief but pithy autobiographical essay, "What Are You Doing in My Dreams?" Both novels come endorsed by their author: in 1957, Powell told the New York *Herald Tribune* that of her works "Dance Night" was her favorite; elsewhere she described "Turn, Magic Wheel" as "very likely my best, simplest, most original book." Between them, they cover her two literary terrains, Ohio and Manhattan. "Dance Night" (1930) is one of six novels that take place in the Buckeye State, and—not counting her very first novel, "Whither," published in 1925—"Turn, Magic Wheel" (1936) is the first of a spirited sequence set in New York City, most often among the bohemians of Greenwich Village. The author changes personality depending on her locale; "Dance Night" partakes of Sherwood Anderson's wistful mood of small-town disquiet and projects the blurred largeness and emotional force of helpless childhood impressions, whereas "Turn, Magic Wheel" has the giddiness and acidity of Evelyn Waugh and Aldous Huxley in such smart, edgy romps as "Vile Bodies" and "Antic Hay"—sendups of modern sophistication from a modern, sophisticated standpoint. As Edmund Wilson pointed out in his own attempt, in 1962, to revive Powell's fading reputation, "she is closer to this high social comedy than to any accepted brand of American humor." By this time, Powell, whose last novel was published the same year, could be likened as well to Muriel Spark and to Anthony

"Nothing that is worth knowing can be taught."
—*Oscar Wilde*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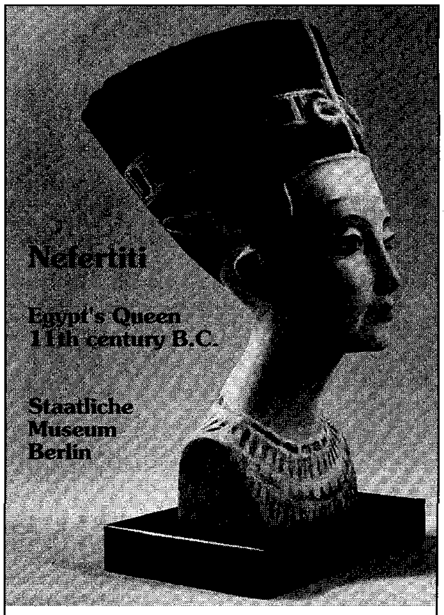

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(no relation) Powell. Her novels feel English in their matter-of-fact expertness, their quickness to set a large cast of characters in motion, their disinclination to moralize, and their subordination of psychological and natural detail to a colorful social weave. Human nature is nature enough; no portentous bears or marlins or whales need apply to Dawn Powell's casting office.

MR. PAGE, whose introduction is a model of measured homage by a recent convert to the Powell cult, betrays his youth when he asserts that "Dance Night" is "a dingy portrait of a tiny boomtown in the last years of the 1920s." The fictional community of Lamptown has as one of its few social centers an openly functioning saloon; therefore, the time of action predates Prohibition, which took effect early in 1920. Since the First World War is never mentioned, and never shadows the thoughts of the young male characters, the time can be pushed back further; one may reasonably suppose Lamptown to derive from impressions of life in Shelby, Ohio—home of the Shelby Electric Company, manufacturer of some of the first incandescent light bulbs—that Dawn received between 1910, when her maternal aunt, Orpha May Sherman Steinbrueck, took her in after she ran away from her father and stepmother, and 1914, when she went off to college. Shelby, in the northern middle of the state, was not only a factory town but a busy transfer point for the New York Central, Baltimore & Ohio, and Pennsylvania railroads. Mrs. Steinbrueck lived directly opposite the railroad junction. The constant switching and rumbling of trains lends Lamptown the romance of distant places and brings to a number of its female citizens specific romances with the itinerant, rakish trainmen.

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Lamptown has an excess of factory girls. "Nine hundred girls, all young and lively there at the Works with no men's factory around to give them beaux": so says Mrs. Pepper, a travelling corset purveyor. Young Nettie Farrell complains, "Every time a new man comes to town it's like dividing a mouse up for a hundred cats." The mob of unmated females fills Lamptown's air with yearning and provides the patronage for the novel's central institutions, the Bon Ton Hat Shop, where Nettie works as assistant to the proprietress, Elsinore Abbott, and the Thursday-night dances at the Casino, which are managed by the travelling dance instructor Harry Fischer. The Casino Dance Hall is situated above Bauer's Chop House, which faces the Bon Ton and Bill Delaney's Saloon and Billiard Parlor to form the novel's conveniently compact stage of action. Morry Abbott, the son of Elsinore and her husband, Charles, a travelling candy salesman, finds comfort in talking to a new arrival in town, Jen St. Clair, a fourteen-year-old foundling-home girl adopted by Bill Delaney and his termagant of an ancient mother. A cat's cradle of frustrated desire is woven among the doorways and stairways of this tiny downtown: Jen loves Morry; Morry is seduced by Nettie and Grace Terris, the "easy" waitress at Bauer's Chop House, but neither seduction takes; both Mrs. Pepper and Mrs. Abbott are in love with the dashing dancing master, Fischer.

Female desire—a mighty topic, though Victorian prudery found it as awkward as does feminist purism—is Dawn Powell's theme, in all its varieties of risk and pain. Even old Mrs. Delaney, in a sharp-tongued effort to discourage Morry's lackadaisical attentions to Jen, crackles with the force of it: "Old ideas and wild blood in her and outside of that I trust no young girl. They're all alike, crazy to get into trouble, always stuck on the boys." The factory girls, we are told, "write their addresses on the crates that are shipped out from the factory and they get answers back sometimes from all over the world. That little Tucker girl they say went all the way to Australia to marry a man she'd never seen." Nettie, in a remarkable scene of desperate sexual predation, defies not only propriety but Morry's seething dislike of her:

> He would like to have taken her by the neck and shook her like a dog would shake a hen, but all he could do was to sink his teeth into her round shoulder and bite as hard as he could. Nettie stopped kicking him and began to whimper childishly. . . . "Now do be quiet about it," Nettie whispered warningly, and didn't even bother to put up her hands in protest when he started tearing her blouse again.

Charles Abbott's paranoid, sadistically expressed suspicions that his wife is

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unfaithful are not wide of the mark; when he is disposed of, in a marvellously downplayed moment of violence, Elsinore and her rival for Harry Fischer's affections, Mrs. Pepper, become hefty, sisterly cruisers on the drygoods circuit, on the lookout for "fine-looking Men" in hotel lobbies and parlor cars. The sexual imperative outlasts and outshines motherhood: Elsinore reflects of Morry that "even as a baby he'd been a stranger—oh yes, part of her in some curious way that made his presence always welcome, but nonetheless he was a stranger. She wondered if other mothers were perpetually astonished at their maternity and secretly a little skeptical of the miracle." And Morry comes to see that his mother's is "the face of a stranger" and to realize that "there was no place for him in his mother's life, that there never had been, and he'd flush with shame to remember his fierce tenderness for his mother as a frantic lover might blush who realizes in cool retrospect that the beloved was always indifferent to him."

No human affections survive Dawn Powell's rueful, sympathetic analysis; in this she suggests Proust. Morry is awakened from his infatuation with Lil, Jen's younger sister, by the perception that "romance was between a man and love, not between a man and woman"; Jen sees that "always she would be left because people didn't care for you the way you cared for them." Childhood itself is a "dreadful cage": "Nothing in life was possible unless you were old and rich, until then you were only small and futile before your tormentors." It's a hard world, Lamptown, and from an inventory of its frustrations and disillusions one could hardly imagine why Dawn Powell is considered a comic novelist. But such an inventory leaves out her animated grasp of mundane details, from the tricks of the millinery trade to the sweaty dazzle of a small-town dance hall, and the driving vitality of her characters' rapt, wily, self-serving talk. Here is the sluttish waitress Grace, dreaming up a future for herself and her asset of "personality":

> "I'm going away, too, believe me. And not to work in any Lamptown dump, either, I'm going to Detroit to work in a big cafeteria. Say, there's a town. A fella was in here the other day, a big bicycle salesman, and he says there's nothing Chicago has got that Detroit hasn't got. He says they got

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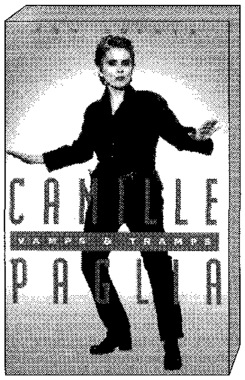

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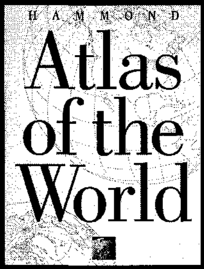

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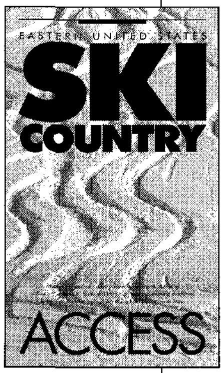

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money to burn up there, fellas crazy for a girl with a little life in her, believe me, I'm not sticking in this dump after what this fella told me. He said why a girl with my personality wouldn't have to take nothin' from nobody up there in Detroit, why he says, Gracie, I've seen girls with only half your personality driving their own automobiles in Detroit and you take this Belle Isle, there's nothin' like it this side of New York City, he was sayin'."

Had Henry Green's "Living" been published earlier than 1929, and achieved wider circulation, one might propose an influence. Not only does Powell have Green's lovely ear for talk, and his eye for our essential egoism, but some of her sentences, like his, overflow punctuation, so brimful are they of the moment:

> Her nose quite red Nettie whirled into the back room and for several minutes Elsinore and Mrs. Pepper heard her banging drawers shut and whistling shrilly to indicate how well under control was her temper.

SUCH poetic hurry is rarer in "Turn, Magic Wheel," as is our feeling that the author is lost within the richness of her bleak material. Dawn Powell here has donned her New York self, and shows a practiced hand. Perhaps too practiced—there is a slight forcing and a touch of condescension in such a bright vignette as this:

> Lüchow's was filled with a lodge banquet and in every room middle-aged men grimly wore paper hats and clinked glasses with their big wives. The orchestra played polychrome waltzes and a fat man was stirred to get up and holding his stomach in, danced marvelously with a thin toothy girl who arched her scanty behind the way her crowd at Montclair always did.

Dance night is every night now, and the magic wheel of love turns as fast as a pinwheel. In the bigger Manhattan environment, Powell's characters seem somewhat smaller and their predicaments more capriciously self-induced. Yet an earnest examination of the literary vocation is afoot, as well as a satire on literary life in the nineteen-thirties, and amid the swiftly rung changes of a booze-lubricated love farce are excoriating scenes, shocking in their nakedness, of the desperation to which love reduces women. Like "Dance Night," the novel pivots upon a male protagonist—not adolescent, sluggish Morry Abbott, with his furtive bookishness and vague architectural aspirations, but a red-haired, mentally hyperactive, young, short, and

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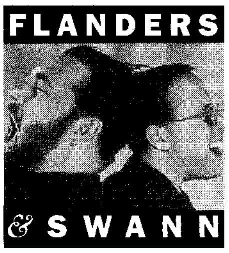

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faintly dandified ("a rather nonchalantly Prince of Wales way of wearing his clothes") novelist, Dennis Orphen. The name invites us to consider Orphen (who will return in later novels) something of an alter ego, since Powell thought of herself as an orphan, and the aunt who came closest to being a mother was named Orpha. Orphen's present problem is that he has for the last three years attached himself to Effie Callingham, the former wife of the Hemingway-calibre writer Andrew Callingham, and has betrayed their friendship by writing a novel closely based upon her. According to Edmund Wilson, the à-clef problem is one that Powell avoided; he "almost never found [her] exploiting a personality . . . he was able to recognize." But what writer does not recognize Orphen's sensations when real life rises up and incredulously confronts its image in art?

> When he came into the apartment he found Effie already there, the book in her hands, and Dennis had his first swift realization of what the words must mean to her. Why, he thought, meeting her stricken eyes, this was not merely writing. This was a living woman he was putting on the market, the living Effie. He felt guilty and angry.

Confrontation of another sort occurs when Effie takes him to the home of her rich friends the Glaenzers, which he has previously rendered in print out of his imagination and her confidences; the fit is so exact that he has "a nauseating sense of entering the looking glass, of dreaming true. "Orphen is relieved to see that one niche contains not the "terra-cotta madonna" he described in his novel but "a large hideous Chinese vase filled with gloomy lilies."

Such Nabokovian games with reality and mimickry are nice, and Powell's satirical creation of the publisher MacTweed and his minions matches Waugh's heartless partnership of old Rampole and Mr. Benfleet in "Vile Bodies." Mr. MacTweed is described as "lifting his horrendous piratical gray eyebrows by specially developed muscles at the top of his skull—certainly no ordinary temporal muscles could undertake such a mighty task very frequently." His minions are all "tallish young men with sleek mouse-colored hair, large mouths filled with strong big white teeth good for gnawing bark

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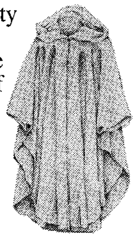
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or raw coconuts but doubtless taxed chiefly by moules or at the most squab, nearsighted pleasant eyes under unrimmed glasses that might be bifocal . . . and agreeable deep voices left over from old Glee Clubs." The barbs directed at then fashionable proletarian fiction, the caricatures of the parties and puffery that accompany a book's publication, the comic ubiquity in Manhattan of literary ambitions, the delirious inflation of the mythical, Europe-dwelling Callingham—all these japes are cheerfully executed by a writer who shunned publicity and never enjoyed high sales, but they have taken on, as satire does, a dated, somewhat petty air.

It is as a celebration of love's monstrous spell that "Turn, Magic Wheel" is still fresh and astounds, moves, and enlightens us. Marian, a younger woman who stole Callingham from Effie fifteen years before, returns to New York, fatally ill with cancer, and Effie becomes her only comforter. Marian, in dying, operatically echoes Effie's own infatuation with a love object who, we do not need his eventual arrival on the scene to realize, is the epitome of obtuse and cruel male self-centeredness. Several scenes in the hospital, as the two women draw close in their shunned love, display a harrowing extreme of poignance and gallant folly. Effie wins free of her erotic shackles, but Marian rapturously dies in them as Callingham at last manages to visit her: "When he saw her lying there he had slipped suddenly to the floor, buried his face on the pillow beside her and so she had died." And the reader's own romantic disposition, even after this travesty, finds satisfaction in the happy amorous ending that the author bestows upon Dennis Orphen. Effie is described in Mr. Page's introduction as Dennis's mistress, but we never see them make love; the red-haired author's lovemaking is all with wanton, gorgeous, silly, married Corinne, who—in another confrontation of truth with incredulous reality—blurts out her adulterous passion to her husband and is not believed. "Poor Honeybaby," he says. "For a few minutes there the poor kid went clean out of her mind."

There is no suggestion, in this charade of amorous delusions, that Dawn Powell would have had it any other way. She continued her own marriage, to Jo-

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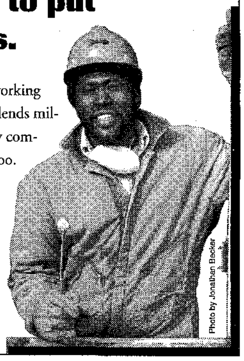
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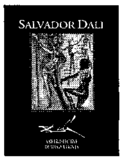
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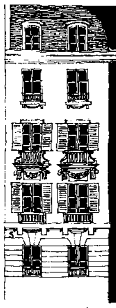
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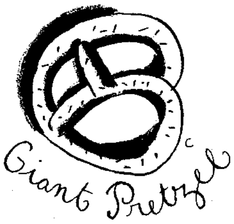
seph Gousha (with whom she shared the care and expense of a handicapped son), while carrying on an extended open liaison with Coburn (Coby) Gilman. Bohemian freedoms were part of New York's enchantment, an enchantment of which she remains a principal singer. "Turn, Magic Wheel" includes lovingly wrought glimpses of that magical New York which a newcomer sees:

> New York twinkled far off into Van Cortlandt Park, spangled skyscrapers piled up softly against the darkness, tinseled parks were neatly boxed and ribboned with gold like Christmas presents waiting to be opened. Sounds of traffic dissolved in distance, all clangor sifted through space into a whispering silence, it held a secret.



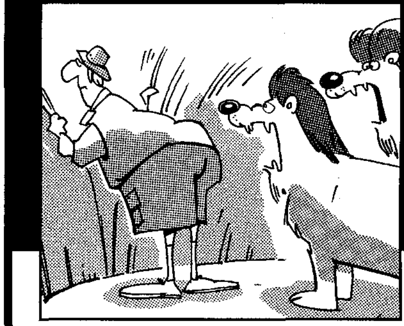
The city is more than its geography and buildings; it is the secret eroticism that a place so purely human concentrates, like a perfume pressed from a thousand flowers. The galvanic sexual currents of "Turn, Magic Wheel" spin off from the metropolis's pooled energies. "The pale lovely city morning, thought Dennis, and was sorry for the country with its poor morning sky bereft of clangor blended into its blue. . . . The endless flow of trucks and streetcars and fire engine all translated into a steady throb in the walls of his fourth-floor room, a perpetual dynamo that operated the life of Manhattan." The life force that in the Lamptowns of the world must struggle against prudery and poverty and class stratification and the onus of being too fully known is strengthened by an impersonal metropolis that reflects back a chosen self:

> Effie got up and looked out the window into the gathering night, twin churches in twin duncecaps of illuminated spires across the street, a skyscraper emptied of workers now threaded with a single row of hall lights, and far-off flaming red sky over Broadway. Outside blurred suddenly into a shadowy reflection of herself in the windowpane, herself with churches, skyscraper, and red sky spreading over the ghostly outline of her head.

Give us your lonely, your misunderstood, your sexually malcontent, your stubborn provincial dreamers: responding to this siren call, Dawn Powell stayed loyal to New York with an ardor beside which that of celebrants like Scott Fitzgerald and E. B. White appears fickle. Such loyalty was in effect a loyalty to the human roil, which she saw with an unhappy child's uniform skepticism and macabre intimations. In the oneiric memoir that ends this anthology, she writes of how, when she thought she was back in Ohio, her "heart began thumping with a kind of terror, the terror of discovering you're human which is worse than any fear of the supernatural."

One is reminded of another Ohioan eventually transplanted to New York, the amiable and yet haunted William Dean Howells, whose fiction, like Powell's, is accused of too cool a fertility and a failure to cater to the reader's need for wish fulfillment. Powell's heroines, like Jen and Effie, arouse sympathy but do not inspire emulation; her lesser female characters tend to be needy, rapacious, and deluded, and are portrayed with a raking frankness that if from a male author might rouse the charge of misogyny. Her empathy with male impatience and resentment in regard to the fair sex is alarmingly thorough. Not that her men, as they boast and blunder their way through these novels and short stories like "Audition" and "Every Day Is Ladies' Day," are saints; they are so caustically conceived as to make one puzzle over her predilection for male heroes. Pervasively sharp-eyed, Powell does not shape her plots to any clear moral; she once said, "My characters are not slaves to an author's propaganda. I give them their heads. They furnish their own nooses." The image reveals a hangman's vision, belied by the far from disheartening bustle of her books. If not pleased by life, she was amused by it. The terror of discovering she was human found mitigation in the very place where humanity was densest. ♦

Pity the Pickpockets!



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SHOUTS & MURMURS

1925: THE YEAR IN REVIEW

BY CHRISTOPHER BUCKLEY

Notable sunset: Sun Yat-sen dies.

Memorable utterance by a famously taciturn President: "The business of America is business."—Calvin Coolidge.

Providing generations of Yale men with dates for the prom, and Dorothy Parker with her line about how if the girls attending it were all laid end to end she wouldn't be surprised: Bennington College founded.

Gaudeamus igitur, juvenes dude sumus: University of Miami founded.

If you are calling with regard to your bill, shout "One!" If the crank on the side of your phone has broken, shout "Two!": A.T. & T. establishes Bell Laboratories.

Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, I put it to you: if we were descended from monkeys, then why aren't I stupid, hirsute, and scratching my purple ass?: William Jennings Bryan successfully prosecutes Tennessee teacher John Scopes for teaching evolution.

Bedtime for Bonzo: Bryan dies of apoplexy shortly after the trial.

It's been real. See you in twenty years: British troops leave Cologne, Germany, after occupying it for seven years.

A coup, mon Président, but why did zey insist on zis clause about widening ze Arc de Triomphe to accommodate "a parade"?: France accepts Germany's proposal for a security pact.

First newborn in history to perform his own C-section: Yukio Mishima is born.

Müller time: Hitler, recently released from jail for his 1923 beer-hall putsch, announces the resurgence of his political party at another beer hall.

And detailed instructions on how to use them: The International Match Corporation of New York gets the contract to make all Polish matches.

It turned out to be a retainer the subject had swallowed while eating a chewy terrine de lapin: Professor Charles Henri, of the Sorbonne, announces that he has located the human soul using radiation.

Meanwhile, in London, researchers are close to finding a cure for cancer: Dr. W. Blair Bell announces that cancer should be treated with lead injections.

In New York City, however, the existence of God was finally, irrefutably proved: The Four Marx Brothers make their mark at the Lyric Theatre in "The Cocoanuts," book by George S. Kaufman, music and lyrics by Irving Berlin.

Worst career moves by aspiring Soviet politicians: Kamenev and Zinoviev break with Stalin.

That's amore*-tization*: Italy agrees to repay the U.S. the $2.4 billion it owes over sixty-two years.

Hallo? But we senta the checka two months ago. Hallo? You call back, O.K.?: A direct 5,422-mile cable line opens between New York and Rome.

You wanna make fun of my accent, fangool?: Al Capone becomes head of Chicago bootlegging.

Does Ken Burns know about this?: Lou Gehrig joins the Yankee lineup at the start of a fourteen-year, .340-batting-average career.

For the same amount today, you could redo the kitchen and add a bathroom: William Randolph Hearst opens his San Simeon castle at an estimated cost of fifty million dollars.

Think what he could have done with the O.J. case: Kafka's "The Trial" is published posthumously.

Coming soon to a theatre near you—sound: New York's Rivoli and Rialto become the world's first air-conditioned theatres.

They were not, however, required to break a twenty-dollar bill or take you to Brooklyn: New York City requires cabdrivers to wear white collars.

Free lead injection with each carton!: The Liggett & Meyers Tobacco Company breaks a taboo by encouraging women to smoke with its Chesterfield advertising campaign showing a woman asking a man to "blow some my way."

O.K., so he's wrinkly and balding, but he still makes a mean spaghetti sauce: Paul Newman is born.

Providing a total of 1,120 years of laughter, tears, heartbreak, triumph, and celebrity endorsements: Johnny Carson, Hal Holbrook, Angela Lansbury, Jack Lemmon, Dick Van Dyke, Tony Curtis, Rod Steiger, Jonathan Winters, Maureen Stapleton, Mel Tormé, Cliff Robertson, June Lockhart, Hugh O'Brian, Dennis Weaver, Mike Connors, Dina Merrill also born.

How did we survive without these?: The automatic potato-peeling machine, Scotch tape, and the motel are invented.

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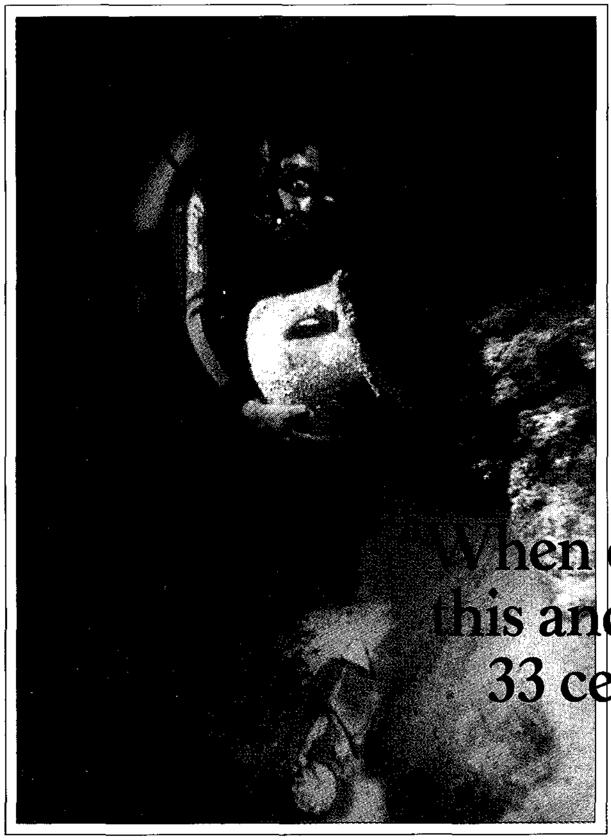


Archaeologist recovering terra-cotta pot at 170 feet.

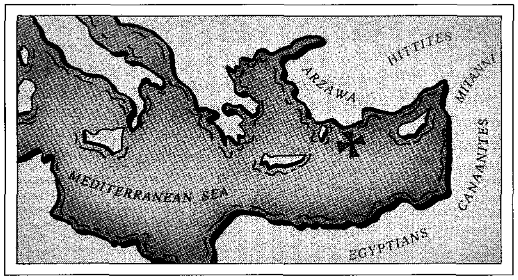
"When exploring the remains of this ancient shipwreck, I travel 33 centuries back in time."

Dr. George Bass

Some time around 1300 B.C., a Bronze Age trading vessel sank off the Turkish coast at Ulu Burun.

Today it lies 150 to 180 feet below the surface of the Mediterranean, protected from marine worms by layers of mud and sand.

Marine archaeologist George F. Bass has been diving for shipwrecks for 30 years, but none is more important than this trader—the oldest known wreck in the world.



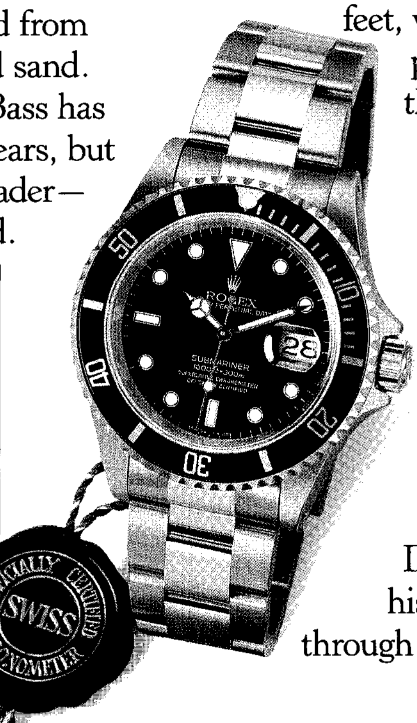
Site of Bronze Age shipwreck off the coast of modern-day Turkey.

Dr. George Bass, expedition leader.

Probing ever deeper into the 3,300-year-old ship, divers uncovered artifacts at every layer. "Each successive discovery is a tiny window to the past," says Bass. "By studying and protecting these antiquities, we can learn a great deal about the civilizations that created them."

As the success of the expedition depends in large part on safe decompression-diving principles, he restricts himself and the dive team to a maximum of 20 minutes elapsed bottom time.

Accordingly, Dr. Bass times every dive he makes with his Rolex Oyster Perpetual Submariner. At depths of 150 feet, water pressure poses no problem for a timepiece that is perfectly at home 1,000 feet below the surface. The massively strong Oyster case, synthetic sapphire crystal, and Triplock winding crown combine to produce a virtually indestructible shell, making Rolex a natural companion for Dr. Bass on his travel through time.



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